

1989

## An examination of the correlation between one school's stated policies in literacy teaching and evaluation and the teaching and evaluation practices in that school

Helen Lynette Woodward

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An examination of the CORRELATION between  
one school's stated policies in literacy teaching and evaluation  
and the teaching and evaluation practices  
in that school.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION (Hons)

from



THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

Helen Lynette Woodward, B.Ed, M.Stud.Ed.

Centre for Studies in Literacy  
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No part of this thesis has been  
submitted previously for a higher  
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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the correlation between the values reflected in the principles contained in the school literacy policy and those reflected in teachers' beliefs and practices in the classroom. Evaluation practices, by their very nature, are determined by the values established and acted upon in a given context. Therefore there ought to be correlation between stated policy principles and teachers' evaluation practices.

Principles were extracted from the school's stated policies in literacy teaching and evaluation. The teachers were interviewed and observations were made of classroom practices and procedures. Descriptive and inferential reports were written and the categories of beliefs, practices and concerns were formed.

The literacy policy principles and the teachers' beliefs, practices and concerns were correlated and incongruencies were noted. The three issues of policy, practice and purpose emerged. These issues have implications for the profession of teaching as it relates to evaluation and implementation of school literacy policies.

A set of procedures were established for curriculum analysis which will enable school personnel to make explicit the instances in which review, revision and adaptation are needed.

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## DEFINITION OF TERMS.

For the purposes of this study, several terms require definition:

- Literacy: The use of language through reading, writing, spelling, listening and speaking for specific purposes and functions including classroom interaction and communication.
- Evaluation: The collection and analysis of data from a variety of sources to assist in making judgements of merit and worth, and decisions about future planning.
- Classroom Practices: Strategies and procedures carried out by the classroom teacher in accordance with his/ her classroom program.
- Beliefs: Ideas accepted as truths. These are identified by such terms as 'feel' 'believe' 'think' and 'should'.
- Concerns: Items that reflect anxiety. These are identified by such terms as 'concerned about' 'uneasy' 'worry' and 'anxious'.

Literacy Principles:	Statements drawn from the school policy documents which express goals and expectations about how literacy should be accomplished within this school.
Literacy Evaluation Practices:	Classroom practices carried out by the classroom teacher for the purpose of evaluating either a child's progress in literacy or a specific literacy program.
Literacy Policies:	Documents developed by the school staff containing detailed information about literacy with the specific purpose and function of informing and guiding the teachers in their classroom literacy programs and practices.
Correlation:	The congruency between the school policy principles and teacher's beliefs and classroom practices.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the correlation between the values reflected in the principles contained in the school literacy policy and those reflected in teachers' beliefs and practices in the classroom.

This study will develop a set of procedures for curriculum analysis which will enable school personnel to make explicit the instances in which review, revision and adaptation are needed. Through the implementation of the recommendations emerging from this thesis, teachers will be able to establish further credibility with the community by justifying the literacy programs already in operation and by modifying or extending programs to bring them in line with school literacy policies where necessary.

## 1.2 Rationale of the Study

Evaluation practices by their very nature are determined by the values established and acted upon in a given context. Therefore, there ought to be correlation between stated policy principles and teachers' evaluation practices. In order to establish whether such a correlation exists, there needs to be a methodology devised that enables school personnel to identify value conflicts between stated policy principles and the teachers' evaluation practices. Inherent in such a methodology would be a process that facilitates decision-making in curriculum development.

This study examines the principles from one school's literacy policies and correlates these principles with the teachers' beliefs and practices, thereby establishing the connection between documentation and practice. Therefore, the focus of this study is policy principles of literacy and literacy evaluation and the teachers' values in literacy and literacy evaluation.

### 1.3 Background of Study

The background for this study will be developed through examination of the differing views of literacy, the development of policy on literacy, issues involved in the teaching literacy, the development of literacy evaluation and the specific milieu of the study.

#### 1.3.1 Differing Views of Literacy

The notion of 'literacy' and what it means to 'be literate' has evolved through the centuries according to the socio-cultural expectations of the community of language users. Knowledge of theology and the classics established in many communities a definition of what it was to be literate but in others, economics determined this fact. Changes in technology and in communities' concepts of education over the centuries have seen changes in the meaning of the notion of literacy.

Resnick and Resnick (1977:370) state that, "There has been a sharp shift over time in the expectations concerning literacy". A literate society, according to Reeves in her article, "How Literate is Literate" (1985:55), is a "society that has become print dependent for essential communications". The Macquarie Dictionary (1986) defines 'literate' as being able to read and write, but educators have maintained that being literate is much more than merely being able to read and write. Cashdan (1986:1) states that literacy is not simply a matter of decoding print to sounds or of converting sounds to print; it involves meaning. Margaret Meek (1986) extends the concept of literacy by acknowledging that to be literate is to be able to read, to write, to think and to know via the medium of print. Thus,

the definition of such a broad term as 'literacy' depends on the context and even the culture in which it is used.

In current western education, the term 'literacy' is used to encompass those parts of the teaching program that involve reading, writing, listening and speaking. As such, literacy is an integral part of the whole of school learning and central to all that happens within the school. Teachers must ensure that their students receive balanced guidance in each component of literacy in order to establish a sound basis for all other curriculum areas. The New South Wales Writing K-12 Statement of Principles declares that the elements of language are interdependent. It goes on to say that fundamental to the understanding of literacy is the recognition of the relationship between writing, reading, speaking and listening. The centrality of literacy in any school program is too obvious and fundamental to be questioned but because of changing community expectations, views of what it is to be literate are in a constant state of flux. There appears to be, according to the Canberra Curriculum Development Centre in the publication Core Curriculum for Australian Schools (1980:6), a growing community and society concern about educational directions and standards.

In late 1987 the Australian community, through the media, and the media itself (Sydney Morning Herald July, 1987) were very vocal in their criticism of literacy standards in schools. Demands were made for accountability of education procedures, particularly in reading and spelling. These demands were supported and supplemented by politicians who pledged to introduce compulsory standardized testing of grammar and spelling in order to 'eradicate' the perceived problem of

poor literacy standards. These statements reflect a lack of understanding of current developments in education, particularly in literacy.

Literacy is the 'linch pin' of the whole education system and should the developing structures supporting literacy programs be undermined by people who fail to understand the value of the work carried out in schools, the education for future generations is doomed. It is vital not only that developing structures of literacy programs be supported, but that the public be made aware, through diligent research, of the actualities of literacy education and literacy learning.

### 1.3.2 Development of Policy on Literacy

Schools in Australia have experienced many changes over the past fifty years, the greatest of which is the shift in responsibility for curriculum development from the central offices of Departments of Education to the schools. The traditional, centrally organised curriculum that was imposed on all schools became school centred curriculums that emphasised the individual needs of each school community. These were devised within broad guidelines published by the central authority. In 1974 the New South Wales Department of Education issued one of the first sets of such guidelines known as the Curriculum for Primary Schools in Language. This document was followed in 1979 with the Reading K-12 Curriculum Policy Statement and in 1987 by the Writing K-12 Statement. Each of these documents emphasised the importance of interdependent literacy education that was to be developed through individual school based curriculum.



In the late 1970s school-based curriculum was initiated in the New South Wales school system. Each school, according to the New South Wales Department of Education in Curriculum Development: The Role and Responsibility of the Centre, The Region and the School (1977), was required to develop its own curriculum, subsequent policies and classroom programs that supported those policies. This was later supported by the first edition of the Managing the Schools document in 1979. Part of the curriculum development was the setting of educational goals or principles, establishing classroom practices and developing methods of evaluation. This change was instigated not simply to give schools more responsibility but to force them to focus on the specific needs of the local population. Documents developed by the Curriculum Development Centre state that it was always the belief of the authors of the prescriptive syllabuses of the past that curriculum documents were only guides and were never meant to be followed slavishly (Curriculum Development Centre, 1977). However, this was not necessarily the case as a survey of teacher's perceptions about curriculum by the Curriculum Development Centre in 1978 found that school-based curriculum development presented problems for teachers and schools. It was found that what was needed most, was clear statements of how the guidance was to be found, the skills developed and the resources discovered. The text book approach, for example, which was once a confirming source of ready made programs was replaced. According to the Curriculum Development Centre, there was now a bewildering array of educational media reinforcing the need for further teacher development not only on how to handle this media but how to implement the ideas it was portraying. It was also realised that Australian society was one that consisted of multicultural groups which had different educational needs and expectations. Because of

these changes, the Departments of Education could no longer presume to know the kind of support each school needed (Curriculum Development Centre 1981). According to the Managing the Schools document (1984), school based policies and the ensuing programs were to ensure appropriateness and continuity of learning for students.

To implement the concept of school-based curriculum many support systems were developed. These included external support in the form of consultants, curriculum support teams, literature, research and special purpose programs. Within the school, inservice programs were developed and many models of school-based curriculum planning were developed. The Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra played an important part in this process. In 1977 a series of conferences established a study group which focused on support systems for school-based curriculum. This resulted in materials being developed for preservice education, inservice education and in-school inservice education. Departments of Education produced written materials such as the Reading K-12 and Writing K-12 documents, to support the needs of their own state.

### 1.3.3 Issues Involved in Teaching Literacy

Over the past twenty years changes have occurred not only in curriculum development but also in the teaching of literacy. Such changes have come about through issue of syllabuses and curriculum (Reading K-12 and Writing K-12), teacher development through inservice and continuing education and research in the field of literacy theory and development.

In reading the most notable change was from the behaviourist or 'outside-in' theory to the psycholinguistic or 'inside-out' theory (Cambourne 1979). The predominant feature of the behaviourist theory was the description of the reader as a decoder, engaged in the transformation of the written form of the language to its corresponding spoken form (Parker 1985). This theory was characterised by programs that emphasised the need to develop the ability to discriminate between shapes of letters and words, to have flash card drills, to spend time in listening to the sounds of words, with considerable effort being directed towards such mechanics as sounding out, blending of sounds and other phonics activities. Whole word recognition and 'look and say' approaches were also indicative of this theory. High levels of accuracy were emphasised with little or no attention given to meaning, especially in the beginning reading stages. Reading was seen as a word perfect skill with the most commonly used assessment being tests on the number of words children could identify from a prescribed list.

The psycholinguistic theory, on the other hand, put meaning foremost. The New South Wales Department of Education supported this stance by defining reading as 'a process of bringing meaning to and taking meaning from print.' (Reading K-12 1979:13) This definition emphasised the fact that reading was an interactive process in which the reader was actively engaged in an attempt to reconstruct the understanding that led the author to produce the text being read (Parker 1985:8) This view of reading was characterised by strategies that supported the notion that meaning was of primary concern. Such strategies included shared books reading, uninterrupted sustained silent reading, cloze and retelling (Appendix 7). This theory

emphasised the value of reading whole and natural text as opposed to the contrived and highly structured texts found in reading schemes, indicative of a behaviourist approach. Strategies based on children's literature (literature-based reading) were highlighted, allowing children to readily respond, in a variety of ways, to the books they read. These responses were in the form of story maps, book reviews, readers theatre or any other responses that was suitable to the particular book, emphasising the importance of style, context, structure and meaning of the text.

Changes in the teaching of writing were nothing less than revolutionary according to Walshe (1982), an intellectual revolution that swept aside the 'bumbling old model' of teaching writing and replaced it with a new and successful model. The 'old model' was structured to teach skills through repeated drills and exercises with no consideration given to the importance of writing (Curriculum for Primary Schools 1952). Surface features such as grammar, spelling and punctuation were given high priority with the weekly 'composition' being marked as a product, without any regard for the process by which the exercise was produced. In 1968 the Curriculum for Primary Schools: English developed the concept of creative writing. This concept endeavoured to change the imposed mechanical exercises to a stimulating experience based activity but it failed to erase some of the most negative features of the 'old model' (Walshe 1982). A single weekly topic was still chosen by the teacher and a 'one shot' draft was written despite the Curriculum for Primary Schools: English (1968) statement that the children should be able to revise their work until satisfied. In the late 1970s a 'new model' known as 'The Process of Writing' evolved. Research by Donald Murray at the University of New

Hampshire followed by conference papers and discussions in Australia in 1980 by Donald Graves involved Australian teachers in this 'new model' (Walshe 1982). The emphasis was now placed on the process involved in writing and its interaction with all other areas of literacy (Writing K-12 1987:5), with the product being of less importance than previously considered (Writing K-12 1987:6). Writing was now seen as a thinking process involving experience, pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing, production and publication and response. This process provided conditions that allowed children to learn to write by writing. It also encouraged children to read and write within a variety of genre, for example, narrative, description, reports, depending on the individual purposes (Writing K-12 1987:7).

Because of the close relationship between writing and spelling as stated in Writing K-12 (1987:9), the revolution in writing affected spelling. In the Curriculum for Primary Schools 1952, the aim of the spelling teacher was to secure the perfectly automatic spelling of words taught. Specific word lists were readily available and in the 1961 Curriculum for Primary Schools: Writing and Spelling, spelling lists for each grade were given. A high level of accuracy was seen as the optimum achievement in both the 1952 and 1961 Curriculums with emphasis being placed on memorisation. In process writing, while mastery of spelling conventions was still seen as necessary, Writing K-12 states that these conventions should be taught so that they relate wherever possible, to the current needs of the children. As spelling was now also considered, in Writing K-12, a process the children needed to develop self-help skills and feel secure about initial non-standard or invented spelling to communicate their ideas. Non-standard spelling could only eventuate in a secure or risk taking

environment that encouraged the children to 'have-a-go' at the words they required (Writing K-12 1987:136) . Instruction in spelling, as stated in Writing K-12 included a spelling program that supported all learners, opportunities to develop and use spelling strategies and activities that heighten awareness of words. Hence individualised programs had to be developed in order to be able to cope with the individual differences, not only at school level but also at class and the individual child level. These issues, involved in the teaching of literacy, had to be taken into consideration when developing school based literacy programs.

#### 1.3.4 Development of Literacy Evaluation

Developing school-based policies through school-based curriculum was not enough by itself. Systems had then to be put in place to evaluate the policies as well as to evaluate the changing concepts heralded in the curriculum statements and extended to the classrooms through the school policies. Prior to the 1970s evaluation of policies was unnecessary at the school level as schools were not involved in the development of such policies. Once school-based curriculum development emerged, methods of evaluating policies needed to be developed at the school level. The New South Wales School Aims document (1977) states that there was a continuous need to examine the aims and functions of the school to determine the relationship between it and other agents of education. The Managing the Schools document (1984:2) also states that, "each school policy and program is to be evaluated regularly". Again, support material from the Curriculum Development Centre and the individual states was developed. While numerous documents and support systems were devised, knowledge of their implementation was limited. In literacy there is evidence

(Unsworth, 1985; Johnston, 1987b; Kemp, 1987) that attempts have been made to align curriculum theory with evaluation material. At the classroom level, however, evaluation is much less stable than at the policy level. Evaluation takes place in all areas of education and at many levels within those areas. Evaluation can be carried out in the form of a test, an essay, a practical exercise or an oral presentation. It can be combinations of these or it can be none of these. It is dependent on what is to be evaluated, the purpose of the evaluation activity and the evaluation audience. Because of the changing purposes and audience combined with the changing teaching methods expounded as the new curriculum statements were developed, stability in evaluation practices was not easily established.

Educators have been striving to evaluate their students' progress and the effectiveness of teaching programs as an inherent function of their teaching goals. Many official literacy evaluation devices such as 'Neale Reading Analysis', 'Progressive Assessment Tests' and 'GAP' reading comprehension tests have been established both in Australia and overseas. According to Johnston (1987b), with constant developments in education and technology, establishing evaluation strategies that keep pace with these developments has proven to be difficult for most educators not only because of the time demand, but also because of the shift in emphasis in educational goals that has occurred over the past decade.

There was also a change of focus within the classroom from a teacher-dominated situation to a child-centred learning situation. The fact that literacy learning is now considered an 'amalgam of processes' (Kemp, 1986:226) presented problems for some teachers. They

had been teaching literacy in a fragmented manner, 'firstly into separate kinds of language (Oral/Written) and then into sub-subjects and sub-sub-subjects' (Brown and Cambourne 1985:1). Each component of literacy was taught separately and the products of these components were exclusively evaluated. The 'amalgam of processes' indicated that component/product evaluation was no longer adequate. Process evaluation of integrated literacy components was necessary but this style of evaluation is yet to find application in most schools (Johnston 1987b). Many teachers are endeavouring to put into practice processes within a literacy format but methods of evaluation to support these processes are limited. Some evaluation techniques such as miscue analysis, read and retell and anecdotal records (Kemp, 1987; Cambourne, 1987) are reported to be in operation in many classrooms but as yet there is little, if any, evidence of their use in the general classroom situation. There is an urgent need for a study that correlates learning processes with evaluation techniques in order to address some of the arising problems, a need this thesis addresses.

For any school-based curriculum development to take place and for evaluation of such development to be undertaken at both policy and classroom level, a supportive environment is necessary. One condition, according to Astuto and Clark (1986) that appears to be vital in professional development at school level, is the active support of principals and other school leaders. It has been further reported (Ingvarson, 1987) that the greatest human resource in schools is the teachers themselves. Some schools have had the advantage of an informed executive and an enthusiastic staff. It is evident in these schools that not only do the teachers benefit from such support but the students as well. The school selected for the present study is one



such school.

### 1.3.5 The Specific Milieu of the Study

The school site which is the focus of this study is located in the south west of Sydney in a densely populated area. Most of the housing is under the control of the Government. The majority of the workforce consists of tradespeople but there is also a high percentage unemployed. Twenty percent of the students at the school come from non-English speaking backgrounds. To cater for the specific needs of the pupil population an intensive literacy program was developed.

Prior to 1984, the school was involved in a reading program known as Distar (Scientific Research Associates 1974). This program was based on the behaviourist theory of learning and was in conflict with the psycholinguistic theory maintained in the New South Wales Department of Education's Reading K-12 Curriculum Policy Statement. Each component of literacy under Distar was taught separately, causing fragmentation and therefore confusion on the part of the students about how language is used in the real world.

Due to the increasing departmental expectations about literacy learning through the release of the two literacy syllabuses ie, Reading K-12 and Writing K-12, and the change in the perceived definition of literacy, the Distar program was phased out in the sample school and new policies that reflected both the expectations and the values of the Department of Education were developed. A literature based reading policy was gradually introduced and a developmental writing program was integrated with the literature program. Further developments in the writing program saw the introduction of a variety

of genre with the students becoming actively involved in the learning processes.

Literacy expectations within the school context were aligned with those expounded by the New South Wales Department of Education through staff inservice by the language consultant, members of the Macarthur Institute of Higher Education Language Arts staff, and associate teachers. Two members of the school staff had recently completed graduate courses in literacy. This acted as a learning stimulus to the other members of staff and gave necessary support to the executive by assisting in the transfer of new approaches from the abstractions of the policies to the integration of the realities into the routine of the classroom.

A further development was the establishment and implementation of a literacy evaluation program. At the time of this study it was only in its infancy but was being implemented and adjusted through classroom application and staff meeting discussions. Since 1984 several school-based policy statements had been developed and were at various stages of implementation. These were spelling, literature based reading, writing and literacy evaluation. Policies concerning speaking and listening were planned. With such a history of development from behaviourist theory to psycholinguistic theory, it was timely for a study in literacy and literacy evaluation to be carried out.

Research shows that many studies have been carried out in the field of literacy evaluation (Clay, 1979; Farr and Carey, 1986; Goodman, 1986; Johnston, 1986; Kemp, 1986). There is little, if any, research that illuminates the relationships between a school's

literacy principles and its literacy evaluation practices. It is important that this relationship be analysed because the statement of principles incorporated in policy documents declares what is believed by the policy writers to be important. These principles set down goals and expectations which determine what will go on in the name of literacy. If principles are established through school-based curriculum development, then they should be evident in the teachers' beliefs and practices in the classrooms as well as in their beliefs and practices in evaluation. These beliefs and practices formed part of the data collection for this thesis.

#### 1.4 Boundaries of the Study

This study concentrates on the processes and connections involved in policy development and implementation in evaluation. Therefore it has been necessary to focus on one school in order to clarify the issues involved in evaluation because these are essentially context specific.

Because of the nature of the research focus, study across school sites or populations was inappropriate. This study concentrates on the instances of classroom practice where a positive attitude towards both the researcher and the research was demonstrated through a willingness to participate. It examines primarily what teachers were doing, not what they were omitting to do. It was important that the teachers felt comfortable with the research questions and realised the importance of the study. It was therefore necessary that the number of participants in the study be governed by persons wishing to volunteer rather than a process of secondment. For an evaluation such as this to be effective, immediate feedback to participants is neces-

sary, therefore the duration of this study was set at six months and feedback given.

### 1.5 Researcher Assumptions

For the purposes of this study, several assumptions were made. Firstly it was felt that the sample was representative of schools that are in the process of developing their own literacy policies. Secondly it was believed that the expressed concerns/beliefs of the teachers were what they actually believed, not what they thought the researcher wanted them to say. Finally it was acknowledged that the sample school's literacy policy was in keeping with the New South Wales Department of Education guidelines in that the theoretical base agrees with that set out in the departmental policy statements.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

Literature relevant to evaluation is immense as is literature pertaining to literacy. Combining literacy and evaluation generates an inconceivable amount of printed matter. Because the focus of this study is policy principles of literacy and literacy evaluation and the teacher's values in literacy and literacy evaluation this review will concentrate on three specific aspects of literacy evaluation. These aspects are a historical view of literacy evaluation with particular attention to standardised testing, current changes in literacy evaluation and the future direction of literacy evaluation.

#### 2.2 Historical View of Literacy Evaluation

Evaluation in one form or another has been with us for thousands of years but, according to Guba and Lincoln, 'evaluation as it is practiced today is little more than a century old' (1981:1) In 1845 Horace Mann attempted to standardise a written examination which required all students to answer the same question (Chauncey 1963). Joseph Rice, in 1895, initiated formal literacy evaluation when he instigated a comparative study on the value of drill in spelling.

This simple experiment pointed the way to an objective method for resolving education differences of opinion.  
(Chauncey 1963:12)

Binet, in 1904, established a test to screen mentally handicapped children from regular classrooms and soon after Tyler contributed to evaluation by formulating an evaluation process based on the concept of objectives. Educational evaluation developed through many stages. It was,

...fathered by the ubiquitous measurement movement that gained momentum with World War I. It then focused on differences that were determined largely through the application of standardised, norm-referenced tests. (Guba and Lincoln 1981:21)

Overseas annual standardized testing programs in school systems abound. Anderson (1982) suggests that their use is almost universal. When investigating standardised tests, Johnston states:

The process through which examination has been made of children's literacy development has been dominated by multiple choice, product oriented, group administered, norm referenced standardised reading and spelling tests. (Johnston 1987b:44)

In Australia Kemp supports this statement and further claims that:

...they [standardised tests] represent test designers' views of expected standards or qualities of literacy in populations which might be quite different from those we are teaching. (Kemp 1987:5)

Cambourne (1985) argues that in most Australian schools the most frequently used assessment procedures, whether standardised or not, are based on invalid and inadequate premises about the nature of the learning processes. In other words, tests designers' views of literacy are reflected in evaluation procedures. For example, Daniels and Diack in their manual for The Standard Reading Tests state:

We have defined reading as the skill of translating the letters of words, in given order, into sounds that

have meaning. (Daniels and Diack 1977:7)

The tests they developed did exactly that. They tested letter knowledge and word order with the belief that they were testing reading. Current theory supported by the New South Wales Department of Education documents defines reading as a 'process of bringing meaning to and extracting meaning from print' (New South Wales Department of Education 1979:13). Reading is not a collection of individual skills, but a meaning centred process. With this definition in mind, tests that fragment the reading process and do not see it as meaningful, do not, in fact, test reading.

Reading was not the only process that was fragmented. Up to the mid 1980s, most Australian schools packaged aspects of literacy into separate components. Brown and Cambourne emphasised the long tradition in New South Wales of 'fragmenting' literacy 'firstly into separate kinds of language (oral-written) and the further fragmenting these into sub-subjects and sub-sub-subjects' (1985:1).

Fragmenting of those components resulted in a skills oriented program which Smith (1984) perceived as being ordered by the arbitrary disassociation of literacy functions from real purposes and intentions. According to Kemp, 'this traditional analytical, factorial view of literacy has been responsible for the continuing production of standardised criterion-referenced tests of presumed subskills' (1985:181). Cambourne (1985) further claims that despite the availability of data about, for example the reading process, test procedures have chosen to ignore such data allowing teachers to continue to 'use the same old tests with the same old meaningless numbers

being recorded against children's names'(1985:176).

Goodman (1976) describes such tests as 'anchors against progress'. They test the ability to perform with abstract bits and pieces of language. Kemp (1985) believes that our present testing procedures in literacy are generally bound up in quaint views on what literacy is and what people see as the purposes of literacy. Spelling and reading were particularly subjected to these quaint views. Skills such as word and phonic knowledge and comprehension were isolated and therefore exclusively tested. Max Kemp states:

Word knowledge tests do not seem to assess general knowledge of words at all but children's ability to say a number of words on an arbitrary selected list. Tests of comprehension do not seem to test comprehension but usually the ability to use what one already knows or alternatively, the ability to master an answering system. Tests of phonic knowledge do not usually use phonics but graphemes. (Kemp 1987:vii)

The construction and therefore the validity of all standardised tests is questionable. Harper and Kilarr (1978) point out that there is a 'circularity in the logic' that is used to establish the validity of tests once they have been constructed. After creating a test according to certain criteria,

Items that do not discriminate between groups are rejected. The job of the test developed is, then, to construct items that discriminate. (Harper and Kilarr 1978:61)

Cambourne (1985) supports this by investigating the problem of ascertaining how the first standardised test was originally validated. He traced most current tests back to some earlier tests which all seemed based on some passages taken from a set of readers known as the



McCall-Crabb readers. At this point the trail disintegrated and so the question still remains. 'How did the constructor(s) of the first standardised test validate this test' (Cambourne 1985:171) Mitchell comments that:

...some tests are published without any validity evidence. More often, however, validity evidence is insufficient and flimsy and offered more as a ritual than to make a firm case. (1984:112)

Johnston (1987b) points out that there are certain problematic characteristics and assumptions that standardised group-administered, competitive (norm referenced) and product oriented tests make. Johnston (in press) further maintains current assessment procedures are largely irrelevant to the classroom which is where the bulk of educational decision making occurs.

Misuse of standardised tests is also problematic. Levine contends that many educators and the public believe there is such a thing as 'second grade reading achievement and that every second grade child should meet or exceed that standard' (1976:230). Farr and Carey (1986) realized this and other problems, such as those created by the release of test results to the media and their use as the sole criterion on which to judge success, hinder accurate and usable results.

Most criticisms levelled at standardised tests and their equivalents are connected with the fact that they do not support current theories of literacy learning. Johnston (1987a) believes current approaches to evaluation do not focus on process but on product, whereas Valencia and Pearson (1987) insist that tests being used to measure reading, for example, do not reflect recent advances in the

understanding of the reading process.

Cambourne claims:

Literacy in Australia has undergone a profound shift in the last decade, culminating in what might be labelled as a 'wholistic-process-oriented-natural' approach to teaching and learning in the literacy field. (1986:1)

Standardised tests supported a 'fragmented-product-oriented-empirical' approach. Consequently the learners were denied responsibility for their own learning. In such instances the conditions necessary for learning to occur - demonstration, engagement and sensitivity (Smith 1984) - were often excluded from the classroom settings. Kenneth Goodman (1982) echoed the opinion of Smith in his critique of the highly institutionalised and structured reading technology, which he regarded as a hindrance to any innovations that may be in accordance with advances in theoretical positions.

### 2.3 Current Changes in Literacy Evaluation

Kemp notes the apparent difficulties in evaluation and assessment procedures brought about by the paradigm shift to a 'whole' literacy curriculum.

One of the interesting problems generated by wholistic or naturalistic approaches in literacy curricula ...in various assessment procedures... [is that] the questions they [teachers, administrators, parents] have always been able to ask about performance levels and have answered quickly, are not appropriate ones in the face of such dynamic changes in curricula as have been brought about by the wholistic literacy curriculum movement. (Kemp 1986:218-9)

Cambourne puts forward the argument for alternatives to traditional assessment in literacy:

The new pedagogy is based on a different metaphor ['wholistic language'] which in turn requires [no

DEMANDS] a different view of assessment based on performance on tasks which involve whole language. This new paradigm demands the methods of qualitative data collection, namely careful observation of literacy-in-process, and or interview procedures. (Cambourne 1986:3)

The Curriculum Development Centre (1980) acknowledged that changes were taking place in education and did not accept the use of standardised tests as an adequate response to the community's demands.

It believed that,

...by training and supporting teachers as evaluators and adjusting learning tasks accordingly, strengthening of community participation in school policy making, bringing closer working relations between schools and other social institutions and improving the two-way flow of information between school and home, we can create a more powerful and educationally valid form of evaluation. (Curriculum Development Centre 1980:6).

Valencia and Pearson (1987) feel that the time has come to change the way to evaluate literacy development. The advances made since the beginning of the 1970s in the knowledge of basic literacy processes have begun to impact instructional research (Pearson 1985) and are beginning to find a home in instructional materials and classroom practice. Yet the tests used to monitor the abilities of individual students and to make policy decisions have remained remarkably impervious to advances in research (Farr and Carey 1986, Johnston in press, Pearson and Dunning 1985).

According to Campbell (1978), in the late 1970s research, particularly in the field of reading, concentrated on process variables, the underlying or focal question being 'How does reading work?' or 'What are the processes that explain and account for the observable

phenomena associated with that act of reading?' In attempting to answer this question, many researchers have been engaged in an attempt to achieve what Huey described as 'the acme of psychological achievement' (1908:6); that is, a description and subsequent explanation of how print is perceived and ultimately comprehended. Kenneth Goodman pioneered this research indicating that future tests would need to move away from counting errors to an analysis of performance. With this idea in mind, Goodman initiated miscue analysis which he saw as:

...an actual observed response in oral reading which does not match the expected response...[It] is like a window on the reading process. (Goodman 1982:94)

Yetta Goodman, in collaboration with Carolyn Burke, (1972) further developed an abbreviated form of miscue analysis that could be used by teachers.

Weaver also assessed the problems associated with standardised tests and came to the conclusion that because:

...standardised tests cannot tell us what strategies a person uses as he or she reads...we must observe the reading process in action. We must listen to the person read aloud. (1980:158)

Other educationalists who supported Goodman,s and Burke's principles, and developed additional miscue analyses were Johnson (1978), Brennan (1979) and Unsworth (1985). Clay's (1979) running record, while similar to miscue analysis, acknowledges the central function of meaning in the processing of text and focuses upon the reader's attention to, and perception of, print.

Just as Goodman had shown that careful analysis of oral reading miscues provided a 'window' through which to view the oral reading

process, cloze analysis was developed in order to gain insight into the silent reading process. Research carried out by Cambourne revealed that cloze could provide the basis for a diagnostic instrument based on psycholinguistic principles yet later he rejected this notion.. Kemp (1987) and Campbell (1978) also assessed the use of cloze analysis and developed procedures that could be used with the whole class as against miscue analysis and running records that could only be used on a one to one basis. However, Kemp states that:

...because cloze testing requires the reader constantly to interrupt the flow of meaning by writing a chosen word in a space [it] might be less valid as a means of assessing reading and more valid as a means of assessing the reader's ability to construct syntactic 'blocks'. (1987:221)

Cambourne and Brennan, as a result of their research, disclose:

There is some doubt in our minds that cloze reading deserves the popularity it currently enjoys. As a device for practising efficient reading behaviour and assessing reading competence, it seems to have relevance only for those who are already proficient readers. (1983:23)

Similarly, miscue analysis comes under criticism by Wixson (1979) and Leu (1982). Wixson acknowledges the critical need for additional research in the area of miscue analysis, with a particular need to investigate the assumptions underlying miscue and as a basis for refinement and validation of procedures to analyse oral reading errors. Leu concludes in an article in the Reading Research Quarterly:

In the last fourteen years many new studies of oral reading errors have appeared. They have been the basis for strong claims concerning the nature of the reading process and the most effective instructional

procedures for children. A close look at both the methodology and the assumptions involved in current approaches to oral reading error analysis suggests that one must be extremely cautious in accepting these claims. Indeed, a more realistic approach may be to treat them as unresolved issues whose ultimate solution requires both a more refined methodology and evidence for the validity of several assumptions. (Leu 1982:236)

Burke in Goodman and Burke (1972) and Johnson (1978) both developed informal reading inventories to assist in discovering children's attitudes towards literacy. Initially reading was the main emphasis of these inventories but Kemp (1987) realised that the format could be used in any literacy field.

Goodman and Burke (1972) used 'retelling' primarily to evaluate comprehension but more recently, and to a lesser degree, it has been used as an evaluation tool for speaking and listening (Woodward 1983). Cambourne (1987) has developed a detailed retelling procedure to evaluate writing. According to Haste, Woodward and Burke (1985), retelling of a story which has just been read aloud represents an unusual social context and is likely to be met with at least a highly abbreviated recall. As in reading, retelling in speaking, listening and writing has several problems, not the least of which is the familiarity of the child with the technique and the text used. Some texts are more predictable and therefore, for some children, easier to retell. Context and text structure are important variables in the retelling process.

## 2.4 Future Directions of Literacy Evaluation

Many alternative strategies of literacy evaluation have emerged. Yetta Goodman introduced the concept of 'kid watching' as an alternative to testing:

The best alternatives to testing come from direct and, in most cases, informal observation of the child in various situations by the classroom teacher. Since the process itself is somewhat informal, perhaps the term 'kid watching' is preferable to the more formal 'observation'. Either way the process is the same. (Goodman 1980:37)

The New South Wales Department of Education (1979), Groundwater and Nicoll (1980), and Kemp (1987) place observation high on their list of evaluation strategies as it covers the day-to-day casual informal observations of the classroom teachers as well as more precise systematic measures needed when a particular decision is to be made. Such observations are recorded in anecdotal records, checklist and rating scales.

According to Johnston (1987b), there have been several studies that suggest that teachers use their hunches and informal observation for instructional decision far more than they do test scores. It seems that an important problem to be solved is how to ensure that teachers' hunches and informal observations are accurate, insightful and as valid as possible. He recommends we take a more radical approach to the improvement of evaluation in literacy than we have in the past. He emphasises the need for teacher development because the teacher will become the evaluation instrument. For this to occur there must first be a perceived purpose for literacy evaluation that is obvious to both the teacher and the children. Not only this, but literacy itself must fulfill the intentions of the user.

The issue of the evaluation purposes was established by Clay (1979), Halliday (1975), Smith (1984), Rhodes and Shannon (1982), Altwerger and Bird (1982), Watson (1983), Haste, Woodward and Burke (1985), Calkins (1986), Johnston (1987b) and Canale (1987).

Curtis in a recent study on literacy evaluation claims:

One of the dominant and all prevailing issues throughout recent writings has been the growing realization that literacy growth occurs in order that the purposes and intentions of the language user him/herself be fulfilled. (Curtis 1987:22)

Haste, Woodward and Burke (1985) take the view that the child is the most appropriate source of information regarding literacy growth. They used an approach which permitted the child to be the linguistic informant. They were interested in what literacy problems the child might perceive and what strategies he or she would use to circumvent these problems.

Johnston (1987b) and Canale (1987) pursue this line of thinking and include it in their theory of process or naturalistic evaluation. They believe that not only should the student be an integral part of his/her own evaluation, such evaluation should also be an integral part of teaching and learning. Johnston states that if this is done

..we can get multiple returns on our time invested and at the same time in good management style, we delegate responsibility for evaluation to those closest to the teaching-learning process, making that process more efficient. (Johnston 1987:47)

Process oriented evaluation strongly emphasises the development



of self evaluation so that learners may become responsible for, and direct their own learning. Canale (1987) discusses this theory and sees the children becoming self evaluators in that they become co-investigators in their own learning process.

This research on literacy evaluation leads to the conclusion that it is important and is in a constant state of change. On one hand, we have a plethora of evaluation strategies that have superseded the traditional standardised tests. These strategies have been thoroughly researched and tested in the classroom. Most have some deficiencies but it is generally accepted that they are far superior to the standardised tests as they are easily aligned with learning theories and support literacy learning processes.

On the other hand, there are many thousands of teachers under the jurisdiction of the New South Wales Department of Education evaluating children's literacy development on a continual basis. Or are they? What is really happening as far as evaluation is concerned in the primary classrooms? Diligent searching has failed to reveal any research or information pertaining to actual classroom evaluation practices.

Kemp concludes:

Teachers who work within wholistic literacy programs will have to resolve some dilemmas in evaluation. One major dilemma is caused by teacher's changes in perception of the purpose of evaluation. (Kemp 1986:223)

Furthermore, the New South Wales Department of Education stated in the Managing the Schools document (1984), that each school is responsible for developing its own policies and programs. These

"policies and programs are to ensure that there is appropriateness and continuity of learning for students" (1984:1). In order for such continuity of learning to take place, evaluation is seen as an integral part of the policies and programs.

This establishes a pattern that demonstrates that evaluation at any level must be congruent with the policies and programs and indeed they are interdependent. Therefore, in order to investigate classroom evaluation practices, policies and programs must also be considered.

## CHAPTER 3

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the theoretical considerations of the naturalistic paradigm as they relate to this study: illuminative evaluation, case study format and the establishing of credibility. It also sets out the practical application of the naturalistic paradigm for this study by establishing the sources of data, the methods of gathering data, the specific credibility measures and the methods of analysing the data.

#### 3.2 Naturalistic Paradigm: Theoretical and Practical Considerations

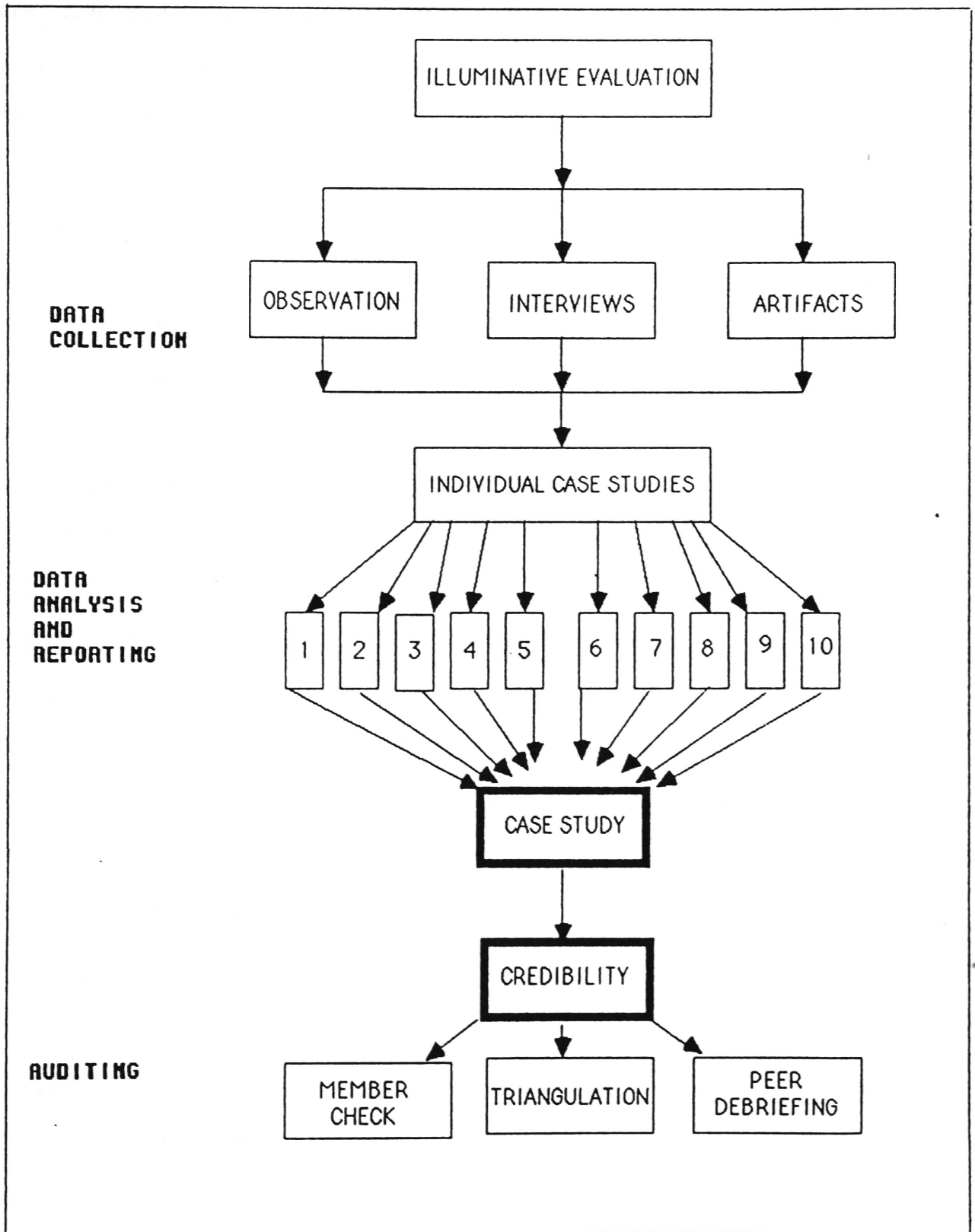
The choice of a paradigm in which to locate this study of one school's literacy policy and the evaluation of the evolving principles, was straightforward. There is strong agreement between recent researchers that a naturalistic paradigm is the most appropriate one to use when conducting research that involves the meaning which humans construct (Brice-Heath in press; Guba 1982).

A naturalistic design typically involves observations of people in uncontrived settings. The basic aim is to discover recurring patterns in the data collected and to explain the meaning and significance of those patterns. As a consequence, a priori hypotheses cannot be stated. Instead, as the data are analysed, possible theories emerge.

These are working hypotheses which guide the evolving design. The design employed for the present study, within a naturalistic paradigm, included illuminative evaluation strategies, case study procedures, and the establishing of credibility.

The flow of research in this study is depicted in figure 3.1. It shows how data are collected through observation, interview and artifacts under the umbrella of illuminative evaluation. Initially this data is reported through ten individual teacher case studies. A single case study of the school is then developed and credibility is established through member checking, triangulation and peer debriefing.

FIGURE 3.1  
METHODOLOGY



### 3.2.1 Sources of Data

There were five main sources of data used in this study. They were the teachers from the school, their programs and evaluation records, the classrooms observations, a staff meeting observation and school documentation.

Data was collected from the teachers through interview and was extended, amended, or confirmed for credibility purposes by member checking. The teachers' programs and evaluation records gave much useful information as did classroom observations. Such observations were carried out sometimes with the children present during class activities and at other times just in the presence of the teacher. The staff meeting attended by the researcher was one of a series of three aimed at reorganising the evaluation documents in all areas of literacy and hence crucial to the illuminative process. The school documents were made readily available by the principal. Copies of the literacy policies, (literature based reading, writing and spelling) evaluation policy and evaluation documents were made available. Copies were also taken of report cards, staff meeting notes and letters to the parents.

### 3.2.2 Research Design

The research design used in this study was based on 'Illuminative' evaluation, involving observation, interviews and the collection of documentary and background materials.

#### 3.2.2.1 Illuminative Evaluation

The principles which guide what has become known as 'illuminative' evaluation (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Stake, 1974) set the parameters for the method of data collection. This type of

evaluation was used as an initial evaluative framework because it best fitted the purposes of the study, and the philosophic view of what evaluation ought to be about. This style of evaluation according to Parsons (1983:127) asks, 'what is happening?' rather than, 'are we having the effect we want to have?' and therefore has a different focus from the more traditional objective based evaluation. Illuminative evaluation involves the collection and analysis of three different kinds of data (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972). For this study these are observation, interviews and documents, and background material (artifacts).

#### 3.2.2.2 Observation

This study used participant observation as through it the observer engages in the very activities s/he set out to observe. S/he becomes one of the group. Cover is not necessarily a prerequisite of this particular style of observation. According to Cohen and Manion (1985:124) most studies in a natural setting are participant observation studies. In this study, participant observation was used to allow the researcher to participate openly in the school routines and activities.

A staff meeting held on the literacy evaluation policy was monitored and field notes taken (Appendix 1) which allowed the researcher to record observations and to develop a working hypotheses in a manner that was non-threatening to the respondents. This was one of three such meetings that were based on modifications to an existing evaluation checklist for each area of language; reading, writing and speaking and listening (Appendix 2). Observations were also made within the context of each classroom. Classroom organisation was noted as was

the environment and the children's work samples.

### 3.2.2.3 Interviews

There was a range of interview styles available to the researcher. They ranged from formal through to completely informal and beyond to the non-directive interview. Within this range there were four principal kinds of interviews. The structured, the unstructured, the non-directive and the focused interview (Cohen and Manion 1985:293). The unstructured interview was used as it has a specific purpose and specific contextual demands to guide its implementation. While it is extremely challenging, according to Wolfe (1979:25), it is well suited to a naturalistic design as it allows the respondents to express themselves openly and naturally. Probes are able to be used to expand the initial statement and therefore allow the researcher to establish a deeper understanding of the data. The unstructured interview, in this study, allowed the researcher to collect data that represented the ideas and values of those being interviewed.

Each interview began with general discussion about the respondent's teacher training and experience. A series of questions were then asked with distinct purposes in mind. The questions were not the same for each interview but the purposes were to discover:

- what the respondent believed about evaluation in general, and literacy evaluation in particular;
- what they did in order to carry out literacy evaluation in their classroom;

and once this evaluation information was collected

- how the respondent used this data.



Questions were asked to expand information in line with the researcher's purposes, and those were followed by probes to develop a deeper understanding of the teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. Even though a tape recorder was used, notes were also taken to highlight points or to establish areas for further probes.

The researcher felt, after transcribing these interviews, that the questions created inappropriate boundaries and further interviews would need to be arranged. This is called bridging, extending and surfacing (Guba, 1985). A redefinition of the focus was then necessary in order to establish a deeper knowledge of the respondent's understanding of literacy in relation to evaluation and to discover each respondent's beliefs about how children learn and what is important in literacy in the classroom.

The new purposes which emerged from the initial data collection, were to discover:

- what the respondents valued in the children's reading, writing, speaking and listening;
- what they knew, thought and believed about the school literacy evaluation policy;
- what they thought and believed about evaluation of reading, writing, speaking and listening;
- how they made decisions about the literacy processes and practices they established in the classroom.

This series of interviews provided a more comprehensive data pool and gave a much broader context to what the teachers were saying about their beliefs. Each interview was transcribed (Appendix 3.) and field

notes were made highlighting statements that needed more information in order to be verified. Further organisation within the school was needed to allow the researcher to go into the classrooms to make this verification possible. This involved setting up schedules and arranging for the teachers to be relieved from their classroom responsibilities.

#### 3.2.2.4 Documentary and Background Materials (Artifacts)

These provide a historical perspective on how the literacy and literacy evaluation program was regarded by different people. Such artifacts can be used in research not only to aggregate common information but to lead to new insights into policy and its formation. In this study, documentary and background material was collected to support data derived from the interviews and to collect the additional data required to establish emerging theories.

Classroom visits, collection and analysis of documents and artifacts such as class programs, evaluation folders, samples of children's work and observations of the classroom environment all increased the credibility of the study through triangulation procedures. Additional artifacts in the form of school policies (Appendix 4), letters to parents, and copies of school-home reports further substantiated the emerging working hypotheses as the data were analysed .

#### 3.2.3 Mode of Reporting

This study utilised a case study format as the reporting mode. A case study format was chosen because it is believed by many to be the most useful format for achieving the two major purposes of reporting

research: that of raising understanding and of maintaining continuity (Guba, 1986; Walker, 1980; Johnston, 1985; Cohen and Manion, 1985).

Initially data were collected from the individual teachers and reported through ten individual case studies. A school case study was then developed using information from the previously nominated sources of data.

### 3.2.4 Establishing Credibility

In any form of research there needs to be some way of auditing the rigor of the study in order to establish trust in the outcomes of the inquiry. To maximize trustworthiness, several credibility measures were used, for example, member checking, triangulation and peer debriefing (Lincoln and Guba 1986).

#### 3.2.4.1 Member Checking

Member checking, both formal and informal, serves to validate interpretations of the data and was carried out throughout the inquiry. It required that the data collected be returned to the respondents for checking. Lincoln and Guba state that:

...the purpose of a comprehensive member check is not only to test for factual and interpretive accuracy but also to provide evidence of credibility - the trustworthiness criteria analogous to internal validity in conventional studies. (1986:373)

Lincoln and Guba (1986:314-15) established purposes for member checking. These purposes provided the opportunity to assess intentionality and what it was that the respondent intended by acting in a certain way or providing certain information. In the case of this study, member checking also gave the respondent an immediate

opportunity to correct errors of fact and challenge what were perceived to be wrong interpretations. Member checking did provide the respondent with the opportunity to volunteer additional information. Indeed, the act of 'playing back' stimulated the respondent to recall additional things that were not mentioned the first time around. It did put the respondent on record as having said certain things and having agreed to the correctness of the investigator's recording of them, thereby making it more difficult later for the respondent to claim misunderstanding or investigator error. It did provide an opportunity to summarise the first step along the way to data analysis and it did provide the respondent with an opportunity to give an assessment of the overall adequacy of the data, in addition to confirming individual data.

In this study, member checking was carried out in two ways. Firstly, the transcripts of each interview were returned to the respondents. They were asked to comment on the content and/or add to it if they felt the need to expand or clarify their ideas. Secondly, a copy of the report written as a result of the interviews, observations and information collected from documentation and background material, was given to each respondent. Again they were asked to comment and/or clarify the ideas put forward in these reports. (Appendix 5)

#### 3.2.4.2 Triangulation

Triangulation superficially appears identical to member checking but there was a crucial difference. Triangulation was a process carried out with respect to the actual data. Information derived from one source (or by one method or by one investigator) was checked

against other sources. The purpose of this activity was to substantiate the conclusions the researcher had reached concerning the respondents' beliefs and practices relating to the research. The information from the interviews was checked against the observations made in the classrooms. This information was then checked against the data produced from the documentation and background material.

#### 3.2.4.3 Peer Debriefing

The purpose of peer debriefing was to explore aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise have remained only implicit within the inquirer's mind (Lincoln and Guba 1986:308). The roles and responsibilities of debriefing, according to Lincoln and Guba (1986), were to explore aspects of the inquiry that might not otherwise surface and to keep the inquirer 'honest' with questions that probe and explore meaning. Peer debriefing also tested any emerging hypotheses, questioned any perceived bias, developed and initially tested the next methodological steps to be taken, provided an opportunity for catharsis and provided a supportive forum for the researcher.

A peer debriefing session was organised with disinterested research peers. These persons had a great deal of knowledge about both the substantive area of the inquiry and methodological issues. Both the inquirer and the debriefers kept written records of the encounter, partly for the sake of the audit trail and partly for reference by the inquirer as she sought to establish why the inquiry emerged as it did. (Appendix 6)

### 3.3 Methods of Analysing Data

Because a naturalistic mode of research was used, it was necessary to identify themes within the data and categorise it accordingly before any actual analysis could take place. These categories had to be formed so that the emerging working hypotheses could be tested. The categorising process in data analysis employed in naturalistic research rests on the notion that the human is a sensitive measuring instrument able to respond to information. In using such an instrument, care had to be taken to ensure accurate and confirmable results.

In order to identify and illuminate the relationship between the school literacy policies and the teachers' beliefs and practices, four distinct procedures were carried out. These were:

- formulating the reports;
- categorising the beliefs, practices and concerns from these reports;
- correlating or matching policy principles with these categories and thereby establishing the relationship between policy principles and principles in practice and
- collecting the uncorrelated or unmatched categories that required further consideration.

These considerations were examined in light of the emerging working hypotheses.

#### 3.3.1 Formulating the Reports

A descriptive report for each respondent was written based on the information that emerged from the interviews, observations, documentation and background material (Appendix 7). By combining the data

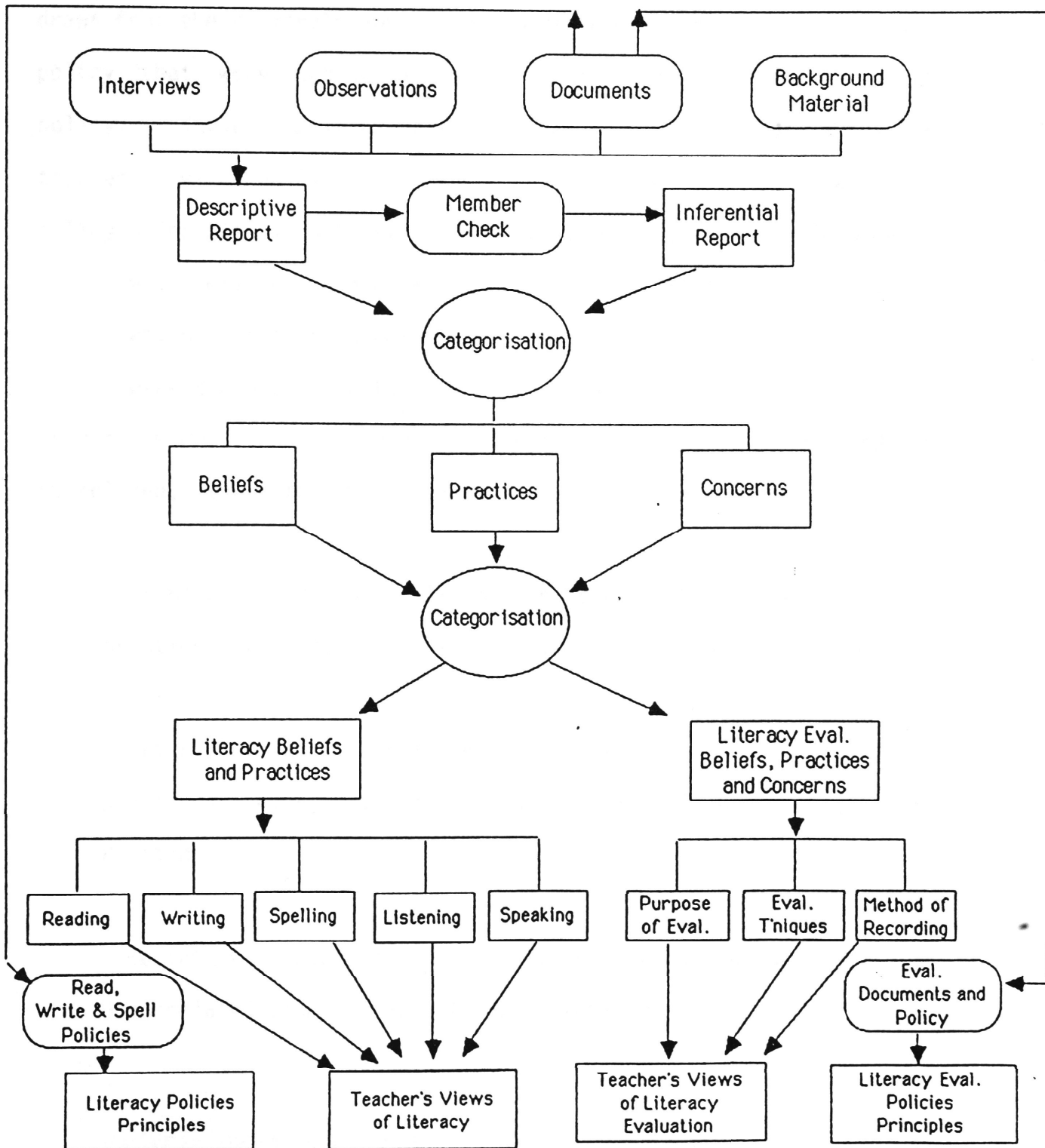
from the descriptive reports, documentation and background material, observations and the feedback from the member checks, an inferential report was written about each respondent. An inferential report is a report drawing concepts and ideas from all available sources, thus employing the process of triangulation (Appendix 7). This report does not necessarily state facts but draws conclusions about the respondent. Three themes emerged from these reports. These were the teacher's beliefs, their practices and their concerns. It became evident that the area of 'concerns' needed further investigation as these statements highlighted some areas that, in the teacher's opinion, needed attention.

### 3.3.2 Categorising Reports

During the initial data analysis, comments falling into each of the three themes were categorised accordingly; the teachers' beliefs, practices and concerns. These themes split into two areas; beliefs and practices about literacy and beliefs, practices and concerns about literacy evaluation. Within the area of beliefs and practices about literacy, the teachers' views on reading, writing, spelling, listening and speaking were clearly defined. In the area of literacy evaluation, the teachers' views on the purpose of evaluation, evaluation techniques and methods of recording evaluation emerged as depicted in figure 3.2.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

FIGURE 3.2





### 3.3.3 Correlating Principles

Principles were extracted from each of three literacy policies. This was done by examination of each policy document. Principles were drawn from the rationale and the broad statements made throughout each policy that were substantiated by the aims and objectives of that policy. These principles were then correlated or matched with the teachers' views of literacy. In order to correlate these areas, the policy principles were listed and the following decisions were made:

- what beliefs, held by the teachers', supported each principle;
- which practices supported both principles and beliefs;
- were there any practices not supported by teachers' beliefs?

Once these decisions were made and the corresponding items matched or correlated, three further categories emerged. These were:

- Principles that correlated with both teachers' beliefs and practices were accepted as the Literacy Principles in Practice.
- Principles not correlated with either teachers' beliefs or practices were categorised as Literacy Principles not in Practice.
- Beliefs and practices not correlated were categorised as Uncorrelated Literacy Beliefs and Practices.

Similarly principles were also extracted from the school evaluation policy and the literacy evaluation documents (checklists). In the evaluation documents, the items on the checklist were taken as the principles. These principles were correlated with the teachers' views of literacy evaluation. Again, further categories emerged.

These were:

- Principles that correlated with the teachers' beliefs and practices were categorised as the Literacy Evaluation Principles in Practice.
- Principles not correlated were categorised as Literacy Evaluation Principles not in Practice.
- Beliefs and practices not correlated were categorised as Uncorrelated Literacy Evaluation Beliefs and Practices.

#### 3.3.4 Uncorrelated Categories

Further correlation of Literacy Principles in Practice and Literacy Evaluation Principles in Practice took place. Each category was listed and correlated (matched) according to the following criteria:

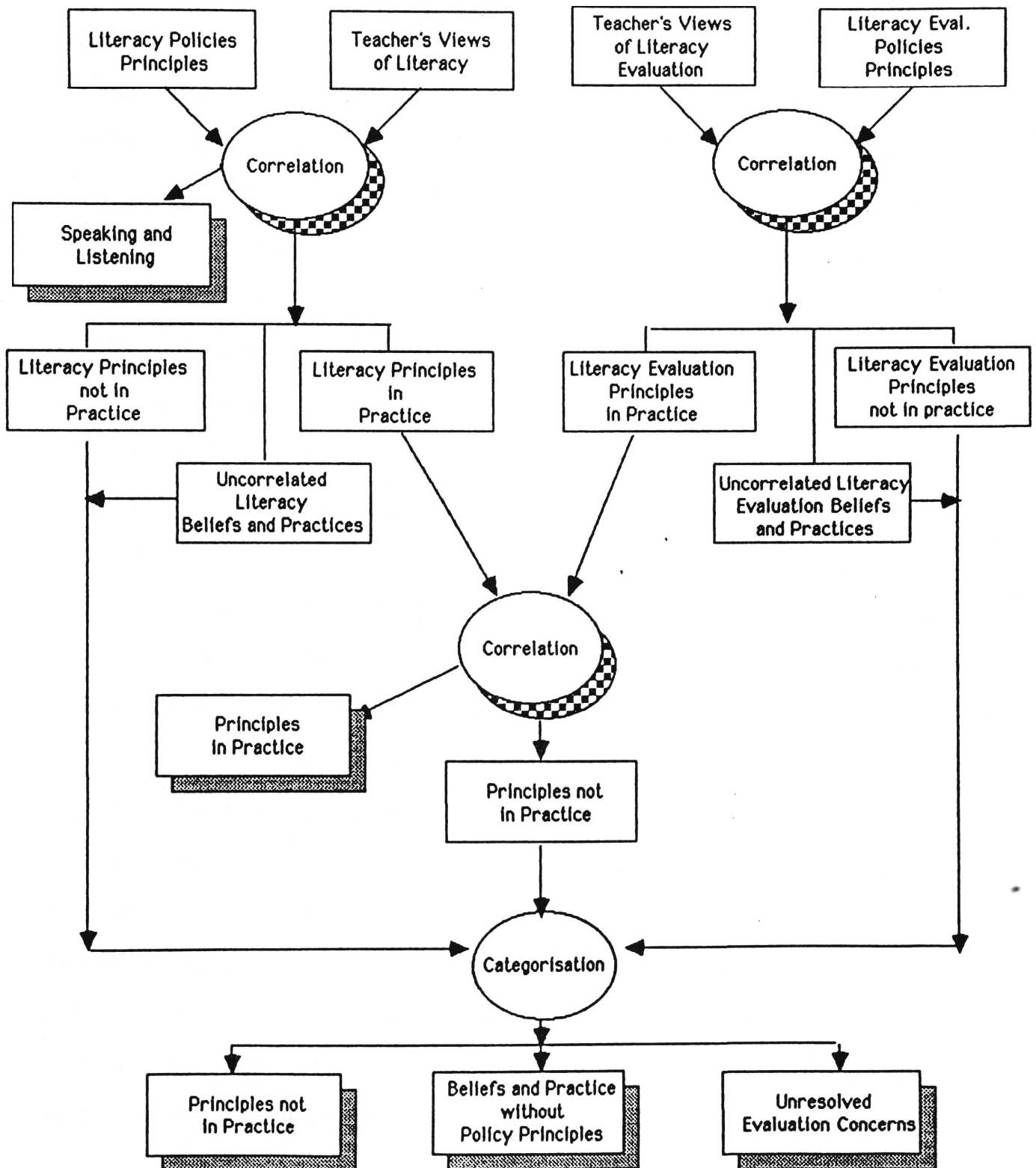
- was each literacy principle being evaluated;
- was there a literacy principle for each literacy evaluation principle?

From this exercise those items that correlated were categorised as Principles in Practice and those uncorrelated were categorised as Principles not in Practice. It became apparent that the uncorrelated categories were the emerging focus of the study. They required further analysis in order to establish the future direction of literacy evaluation. The two major issues that emerged from the uncorrelated categories were Principles not in Practice and Beliefs and Practices without Policy Principles. A further issue developed as there were teachers' concerns about literacy evaluation not able to be

substantiated by either policy principles or teachers' beliefs and practices. The category Unresolved Evaluation Concerns was formed from this data as depicted in figure 3.3.

**PHASE 2  
FOCUSED EXPLORATION  
AND DATA ANALYSIS**

**FIGURE 3.3**



### 3.4 Summary.

In this chapter the design of the study was examined. The theoretical considerations representative of the naturalistic paradigm were outlined. These considerations were illuminative evaluation, case study format and the measures for establishing credibility. This design supported the naturalistic stance of the researcher as it involved observation of people in natural, as against contrived situations. It allowed theories to develop as the study proceeded. The practical application of these theories was achieved through the collection of data from five different sources that included the teachers and their environment. The use of three different methods of gathering the data allowed for variety and depth in the collection of data as well as the provision of quality information which informed the researcher in the manner of illuminative evaluation. This data was recorded in the case study format. The necessity to authenticate the study was acknowledged and credibility measures were identified and incorporated. These included member checking, peer debriefing and triangulation. The data were analysed through four distinct procedures. These procedures of formulating reports, categorising reports, correlating principles and categorising uncorrelated data allowed new theories to be developed. Once the established literacy principles and literacy evaluation principles were correlated with the teachers' beliefs and practices, it became apparent that this correlation was not the focus of the study. The redefined focus became the uncorrelated data and the formation of possible methods for adjustment that these suggest in relation to the stated principles.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the correlation between literacy principles and the teachers' literacy beliefs and practices which were established in the categories of reading, writing, spelling, speaking and listening. Once these categories were established the policy principles were correlated with the teachers' beliefs and practices and uncorrelated data were formed. Literacy evaluation was also investigated and evaluation policy principles established in the categories of purpose, technique and methods of recording evaluation. These policy principles were correlated with the teachers' beliefs, practices and concerns about literacy evaluation and further uncorrelated data were formed. The uncorrelated data were analysed and the categories of principles not in practice, beliefs without policy principles and unresolved evaluation concerns were established.

## 4.2. Literacy: Reading

The Reading Policy at the sample school was titled (inaccurately) 'Literature-Based Reading'. In fact this title was used to assist in diverting teachers' attention from reading schemes which did not emphasise literature, to literature-based reading. It was argued that 'literature' demonstrated the role reading plays in the total education of each child though exposing them to a variety of literary experiences.

### 4.2.1 Principles of the Reading Policy

The school's literature policy was written by a small committee of teachers and was implemented over two to three years. The principles that emerged from this policy were as follows:

1. Reading should not be learnt/taught by phonics or whole word approaches. It should be learnt/taught through study of whole texts, increasing the children's ability to read for meaning;
2. Literature should be more advantageous than schemes because it is not controlled or stilted, making prediction and confirmation possible;
3. Concentration on context should be more important than mechanics;
4. Children should develop a love of reading; they should enjoy reading and have a desire to read;
5. Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (U.S.S.R.) should be used;
6. Both narrative and expository texts should be read;

7. Independent activities as well as teacher directed activities should be programmed;
8. A variety of material should be available that reflects children's interests and various genre;
9. Children should respond to books;
10. Fear of failure should be excluded by literature-based reading;
11. Children should be given the opportunity to read;
12. Reading should affect writing.

#### 4.2.2 Reading: Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

In reading, the majority of the ten teachers (six) believed that making meaning was at the centre of reading. Home assistance was valued by four teachers and three teachers felt that reading was not a word perfect skill and recognised that enjoyment of reading was important. It was also felt by three teachers that good readers read many books, were capable of choosing appropriate books and were independent. Confidence was considered an important attribute (five teachers) and one teacher felt that memorization contributed to confidence. The connection between reading and writing was recognised. Literature, both as a basis for reading and as a part of the whole literacy program, was given a high priority (six teachers). It was felt by two teachers, that phonic drill and word attack skill development were necessary for beginning readers. They also felt that reading was the blending of sounds and that beginning readers learnt individual words first.



Beliefs drawn from this analysis were:

- making meaning was important;
- home assistance was of value;
- reading was not a word perfect skill;
- enjoyment of reading was important;
- good readers read many books;
- good readers can choose appropriate books;
- good readers were independent;
- confidence was important;
- memorization contributed to confidence;
- reading and writing are connected;
- reading was part of the whole literacy program;
- literature was of great value;
- phonic drill and word attack skill were necessary for beginning readers;
- reading was the blending of sounds;
- beginning readers learnt individual words first.

In practice, such strategies as shared book, U.S.S.R. (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading), cloze and retelling were used (Appendix 8). A variety of grouping arrangements were used and activities such as story reading, writing, comprehension question, labelling, writing word lists and word matching activities were used in conjunction with reading. (Figure 4.1)

FIGURE 4.1  
READING CORRELATION

Principles	Teacher's beliefs	Teacher's practices
Reading for meaning. (Not phonics or word drill)	Meaning is important	Retelling, cloze Comprehension quest U.S.S.R.
Whole texts	Good readers read many of books, can choose appropriate books, reading through liter- ature, retelling,	Shared books U.S.S.R. re- telling, and reading.
Literature based reading (not schemes)	Reading through literature.	Uses literature Shared book, re- telling//reading.
Predictable and confirmable texts	Literature-based reading.	Shared book Cloze
In context (not mechanics)	Reading literature	Shared book, cloze Comprehension,
Attitude...love of reading enjoy books desire to read	Enjoy reading.	U.S.S.R. Sharing
U.S.S.R	Read lots of books	U.S.S.R.
Narrative and expository texts	Reading is a whole language activity	Cloze, comprehension, picture labels
Independent activities	Good readers are independent.	U.S.S.R., Cloze Comprehension and retelling.
Teacher directed activities	Reading literature	Retelling, Shared book, literature used.
Opportunity to read	Reads lots of books	U.S.S.R.
Responds to books	- -	Sharing
Reading affects writing	Reading helps develop writing .	Writing

### 4.2.3 Correlation

In correlating the reading policy principles with the beliefs and practices of the teachers' views of literacy it was discovered that there was only one principle not accounted for by the teachers' beliefs. This was 'No.10; Fear of failure should be excluded by literature based reading'. Several beliefs and practices prevailed that were contrary to the principles. These were beliefs that reading is the blending of sounds, that memorizing helps confidence and that beginning readers learn individual words first. The practices that were not in consonance with the principles were the use of word lists, word matching activities, and the use of Rigby Reading Scheme. Beliefs that were in consonance with the psycholinguistic theory of reading, but did not have an equivalent principle, were that reading is not a word perfect activity and home background helps the children in their reading.

### 4.2.4 Discussion

The school reading 'literature' policy reflected the psycholinguistic theory recommended in the Reading K12: Curriculum Policy Statement. Most of the teachers were attempting to put this theory into practice by constant use of literature and the implementing of such strategies as U.S.S.R., shared book and cloze. There was still some residue of strategies such as phonic drill and word attack skills that are contrary to psycholinguistic theory.

### 4.2.5 Comment

A clear understanding of the theory needs to be foremost in the minds of these teachers so that not only do they apply the principles underlying the theory, but they are also able to develop strategies in

line with current thinking and practice. These strategies will then be in consonance with the school's policy. Adjustments need to be continually made in order for both teachers and children to benefit.

### 4.3 Literacy: Writing

This component of literacy focuses on written expression as opposed to handwriting. Writing incorporates a variety of genre and allows for individual styles.

#### 4.3.1 Principles of the Writing Policy

This policy highlights the change in the teaching of writing from product oriented to process oriented teaching as purported by the newly released Writing K-12 policy statement. It has been at least two years, however, since this policy has been inserviced with the staff even though there has been some staff development in the area of the writing process. The following principles emerged from the policy document:

1. Writing should be a process as well as a product;
2. Children should write daily, use a variety of genre and publish;
3. Classrooms should immerse the children in writing and encourage them to write;
4. Writing should have purpose, meaning and audience;
5. The writing process should have many steps and each piece of writing need not be taken through all steps;
6. Response to writing should reflect on the meaning of the message;
7. In expository writing the response should be more critical.

#### 4.3.2 Writing: Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

On the issue of writing, seven of the ten teachers believed that using different genre was important and that writing should make sense. They believed that good writers show confidence and were able to keep to the topic. That children should be able to observe teachers demonstrating salient writing concepts and be able to make their writing interesting, were the views of two teachers. There were differing expectations about the quality and quantity of children's writing. One teacher felt that quality at year six level was more important than quantity, whereas another teacher felt that at the infants (K-2) level, quantity was more important than quality. One teacher felt that good writers used real, or conventionally spelt, words and could remember what they had written. Content and attitude toward writing were viewed as important by five teachers, and scribing, that is, the teacher writing for the child, helped with conventions and letter formation for one teacher. It was recognised by two teachers that writing highlighted the children's individual writing styles which showed use of imagination, book knowledge and a sense of language. Seven teachers acknowledged that writing must be enjoyable, it must be carried out frequently and be of literary worth. Publishing, it was felt (two teachers), was not always up to the teacher's expected standards but that good writers had very little adjustment to make at the publishing stage.

Beliefs drawn from this analysis were:

- use of different genre was important;
- writing should make sense;
- good writers show confidence;
- good writers were able to keep on the topic;
- teacher demonstrations are important;

- writing should be interesting;
- quality was important;
- good writers used conventionally spelt words;
- good writers could remember what they had written;
- content and attitude were important;
- scribing helped conventions;
- individual writing styles used imagination, book knowledge and a sense of language;
- writing should be enjoyable;
- writing should be carried out frequently;
- writing should be of literary worth;
- good writers should make very little adjustment when publishing.

Seven teachers reported that they used both free topic choice and set topics in writing (most of the latter were factual topics). Most teachers (seven) carried the writing process through to publishing with some scribing and copywriting being done with beginning writers (Figure 4.2).

FIGURE 4.2

## WRITING CORRELATION

Principles	Teacher's beliefs	Teacher's practices
Process and product important	Writing must make sense Keep to the topic Literary worth, sequencing use imagination, good sense of language, publishing, use of conventions.	Publishing
Daily writing	Children should write often.	(Timetable)
Variety of genre	Different genre important.	Write to set topic.
Publishing	Publishing, good writers need little adjustment in publishing	Publishing
Writing must have meaning	Writing must make sense.	
Classroom should immerse and encourage.	- -	(Classrooms)

4.3.3 Correlation.

In correlating the writing principles with the beliefs and practices of the teachers' views of literacy, it was discovered that two principles were not accounted for by either beliefs or practices of the teachers. These were 'No.4; Writing should have purpose and audience' and 'No.5; The writing process should have many steps and not all of these steps have to be attended to in each piece of writing'. There was no indication whatsoever in the principles that attitude or confidence were important. There was also no principle to substantiate the belief that scribing and the practice of copy-writing helped with the conventions of writing and letter formation, particularly with beginning writers. There was also no recognition that children's writing was characterised by individual styles.



#### 4.3.4 Discussion

The principles set out in the policy were well accommodated with the exception of purpose in writing and the actual process of writing. The use of genre was acknowledged as was the need for different writing styles. Publishing standards were questioned and quality versus quantity remained an unresolved issue. The affective areas of writing were recognised by the teachers as important. Confidence, enjoyment and attitude were considered by teachers as vital, but the policy did not acknowledge their importance in any way.

#### 4.3.5 Comment

In defining the purposes for writing, the audience becomes important and indeed vital to its existence. Without an audience writing becomes purposeless. The purpose of writing must be identified if the principles of the writing policy are to be put into practice. Therefore, attention to audience must be one of the prime concerns.

#### 4.4 Literacy: Spelling

Spelling was beginning to be recognised, in the sample school, as integral to writing but until such times that full integration is accomplished, separate policies for spelling will continue to be written.

##### 4.4.1 Principles of the Spelling Policy

This policy has been recently updated (1987) and inserviced with the staff. The relationship between writing and spelling is characterised in this policy from which the following principles emerged:

1. Reading, writing and spelling should be interrelated;
2. Spelling, like writing, should have a purpose;
3. Spelling should be taught through writing;
4. Children should be responsible for their spelling.
5. Spelling should be a tool for writing;
6. Thoughts not conventions should be important at the initial draft stage of writing;
7. Spelling should be more than randomly selected lists;
8. Spelling should be taught through editing;
9. Theme words, interest words and survival words should be pre tested;
10. Dictation should be unnecessary. Daily writing and editing should suffice;
11. There should be different levels of progress in spelling;

#### 4.4.2 Spelling: Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

Six teachers believed that good writers 'have-a-go' at spelling and that this required a risk-taking atmosphere in the classroom. It was felt that the children should be able to identify errors or use resources to check their spelling (five teachers). Individual capabilities were acknowledged by the introduction of individual spelling lists with the number of words for each child being negotiated between the teacher and the children themselves (two teachers). It was generally felt (four teachers) that good spellers did not invent the spelling of words but that they used 'safe' words; words they already knew. They also used sounds, word attack skills and had word awareness. Good spellers were sometimes good in other literacy areas as well but not always (one teacher). It was felt by three teachers that confidence and independence should be developed and that spelling errors in the first draft were acceptable.

Beliefs drawn from this analysis were:

- good writers 'have-a-go' at spelling;
- a risk-taking atmosphere was required in the classroom;
- children should be able to identify spelling errors;
- children should be able to use resources to check their spelling;
- individual differences were catered for with individual negotiated spelling lists;
- good spellers did not 'invent' words;
- good spellers used 'safe' words;
- good spellers used sounds and word attack skills;
- good spellers had word awareness;
- good spellers sometimes good in other literacy areas;

- confidence and independence were needed;
- spelling errors were acceptable in the first draft.

In practice, most teachers (six) used individual spelling lists for the children. These were taken from the children's writing. Three of these teachers tested their children on an individual basis while the others used proofreading and relied on reoccurrence of errors in the children's writing to act as an evaluation of their spelling (Figure 4.3).

FIGURE 4.3

## SPELLING CORRELATION

Principles	Teacher's beliefs	Teacher's practices
Reading, writing and spelling are interrelated	Good writers 'have a go' at spelling, good spellers good at comprehension.	Spelling lists chosen from writing.
Spelling taught through writing.	- -	Spelling taken from writing.
Pupils responsible for own spelling.	Negotiated lists	Individual lists
Thoughts not conventions in first draft.	Spelling doesn't matter in first draft.	- -
Pupils should take risk in spelling.	Word lists negotiated Individual lists.	Individual lists.
Editing (not dictation)	Able to correct own work	Proofreading.

#### 4.4.3 Correlation

Correlating the principles of the spelling policy with the beliefs and practices the teachers held about literacy revealed that there were three principles not acknowledged by the teachers. These were 'No.2; Spelling should have purpose', 'No.9; Pretests should be given in spelling when using theme, interest or survival words', and 'No.11; There should be levels of progress in spelling development'. There were also several beliefs not accounted for by principles. These were: that children should be able to use resources to check their spelling; that there was a recognition of varied ability from child to child and there was a need to develop confidence and independence in each child. The use of word attack skills and initial sounds were believed to be needed but these beliefs were contrary to psycholinguistic theory.

#### 4.4.4 Discussion

Individual spelling lists were widely used with consideration for the individual development of each child. There was, however, a lack of emphasis on the purpose in spelling. A wide variety of beliefs were held about the qualities of good spellers and again, there is evidence that the psycholinguistic theory is not completely in place yet with some emphasis on sounds and word attack skills.

#### 4.4.5 Comment

Individual spelling lists had the added advantage of ensuring each child was given the opportunity to develop at his/her own rate. Such a strategy encourages each child as it ensures success and increases his/her self esteem. Lack of purpose, however, counteracts some of the advantages of individual lists in that the children lack the incentive to develop functional spelling vocabularies.

#### 4.5 Literacy: Speaking and Listening

Because of the reciprocal nature of these two literacy components they are usually classified as one item. It is recognised that most of the 'learning' in speaking and listening takes place before the child even enters school and while highly regarded in schools, speaking and listening is generally of lower priority than reading, writing or spelling.

##### 4.5.1 Speaking and Listening: Teacher's Beliefs and Practices

Only three teachers believed that children needed to be confident and enjoy speaking. It was felt (three teachers) that the children needed to be able to listen to follow directions, use 'standard dialect' and use the conventions of listening. Speakers, it was felt (four teachers), needed to concentrate, speak clearly and audibly and must listen to others. Four teachers believed that many things influenced speaking and listening. Some of the most important were personality, behaviour and language background. It was also felt by one teacher that shyness sometimes overrode speaking ability. In practice, such listening activities as story tapes and shared book were used.

##### 4.5.2 Discussion

Emphasis was placed on the child's ability to be audibly accurate with little consideration given to the child who may be able to speak well but is shy or is not able to relate to the purpose of the speaking/listening exercise.

#### 4.5.3 Comment

There is as yet no policy for the areas of speaking and listening but the beliefs stated in the reports should give a basis for such a policy.

#### 4.6 Literacy Evaluation: Purpose

Analysis of the teachers' beliefs, practices and concerns about literacy evaluation showed that purpose in evaluation was important.

##### 4.6.1 Principles of Evaluation Policy - Part A

Evaluation Policy - Part A is the general school policy on evaluation. It is not specific to literacy, nor has it been recently revised or inserviced but it emphasises the purposes of evaluation. The principles emerging from this policy are as follows:

1. Evaluation should provide for the collection of evidence which shows the degree to which pupils are progressing towards curriculum goals;
2. Evaluation should permit teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum experiences, activities and instructional methods;
3. Evaluation should make provision for guiding the growth of individual pupils;
4. Evaluation should diagnose weaknesses and strengths;
5. Evaluation should provide a basis for modification of curriculum or introduction of experiences to meet the needs of individual and groups of pupils;
6. Evaluation carried out should be both summative and formative;



## 6.2 Purpose of Evaluation: Teachers' Beliefs Practices and

### Concerns

Five teachers overtly stated their beliefs about the purpose of evaluation while the other five implied their beliefs. Three of the five stated that evaluation should lead to their altering their programming either on a whole class and individual basis. The majority of teachers (eight) believed that evaluation is for accountability and reporting to parents. One teacher believed that evaluation should be cyclic, in that activities set should be as a result of a problem assessed through evaluation. Two other teachers stated that evaluation should show children's needs; to see where the children are going and to show difficulties that need attention. Yet another teacher stated that evaluation made one aware of what one was teaching, emphasising that it should be continual.

Beliefs drawn from this analysis were:

- evaluation should lead to alteration of programs;
- evaluation was for accountability;
- evaluation should be cyclic;
- evaluation should show children's needs;
- evaluation should be continual;
- evaluation made the teachers aware of what they were teaching.

The teachers also had some concerns that reflected confusion in the area of purpose of evaluation. Some of these concerns were that there was a lack of follow up to evaluation; how and what to document; and the motive for extensive evaluation (Figure 4.4).

FIGURE 4.4

## EVALUATION PART A CORRELATION

Principles	Teacher's beliefs	Teacher's practices
Collection of evidence shows pupil progress	For reports accountability	(Marks) Reports to parents. Anecdotal records
Evaluation effectiveness activities and experiences	- -	(Programs)
Evaluation provides for guidance and growth of pupils.	Improve/alter programs	- -
Diagnoses weaknesses and strengths.	Shows needs, direction and difficulties. In the head knowledge.	- -
Should be summative and formative.	Continual and cyclic.	

4.6.3 Correlation

On correlation of the principles about the purpose of evaluation with the teacher's beliefs, practices and concerns about literacy evaluation, it became evident that the teachers believed the stated principles, but there was little evidence of practices to support these principles. Programs showed only minimal evaluation of experiences and activities with little evidence of evaluation that would lead to guidance and growth of individual pupils. Diagnostic evaluation was not evident except for the 'in the head' knowledge kept by the teacher. According to Groundwater-Smith and Nicoll (1980), this type of evaluation erodes over time. There was no evidence of changes in programs as a result of evaluation and reports to parents were the

only practice that could be considered in any way, a record of pupil growth. The teachers' belief that evaluation is for accountability was put into practice through parent reports and the record of marks in their evaluation books. The teachers' concerns about the purpose of evaluation emanated because there were no principles to allay these concerns.

#### 4.6.4 Discussion

The purpose of teacher evaluation, according to the teachers' beliefs, was to establish the children's needs on a continual basis and to alter teaching plans and programs in line with the findings. It was also for accountability and for reporting to parents. In practice there was evidence only of accountability and reporting with a small amount of evaluation of activities in some programs.

#### 4.6.5 Comment

With the conflict between perceived purposes and actual practices in evaluation purposes, concerns about evaluation abounded and without any policy principles to allay these concerns complete disillusionment about the purpose of evaluation will continue to prevail.

## 4.7 Literacy Evaluation: Techniques

In literacy evaluation the techniques vary from teacher to teacher and from class to class. They are basically dependent on what the teacher sees as the purposes of evaluation. Specific techniques are outlined in 4.7.2.

### 4.7.1 Principles of the Evaluation Policy - Part B

Policy - Part B consists of three checklists; reading, writing, and speaking and listening. These principles were devised by one staff member and refined by the whole staff over a series of staff meetings. The principles that emerged from this policy are as follows:

1. Reading should be enjoyable and interesting;
2. Independent selection of books for reading should be important;
3. U.S.S.R. should be valuable;
4. Prediction should be necessary when reading;
5. Reading should require the use of all three cueing systems;
6. Cloze and retelling should be important evaluation strategies;
7. Readers should demand that reading makes sense;
8. Graphic layouts such as maps, diagram etc should be important;
9. Reading should involve correct use of indexes and content pages;
10. Writing should be enjoyable;
11. Writing time should be used efficiently;

12. The writing process should be followed;
13. Standard dialect should be used;
14. Both factual and non-factual pieces should be written;
13. Pupils should write in their free time;
14. They should be able to identify errors in their writing;
15. They should be able to use references to check their spelling;
16. They should show competency in spelling;
17. In speaking and listening clarity and confidence should be important;
18. Pupils should enjoy drama;
19. Oral discussion should extend across the curriculum;
20. Listeners and speakers should respect the rules and routines of conversation;
21. Listeners should be able to absorb meaning and act upon it;
22. Pupils should enjoy listening to books;
23. Pupils should participate in shared reading;
24. Pupils should be able to contribute to discussion;
25. Pupils should experiment with spelling;

#### 4.7.2 Evaluation Techniques: Teachers' Beliefs, Practices and Concerns

Cloze, retelling and observation were believed by the majority of teachers (seven) to be sound evaluation techniques in reading. Observation of children's work (samples of work) was used to evaluate writing (four teachers). Observations such as listening to the children speaking during class and small group discussion, and noting if the children are listening during story reading and class 'talks', were used as techniques to evaluate listening and speaking (four teachers). 'Trial and error' was mentioned by three teachers as a technique for evaluating the position of a child/children in groups or for quantity of work given, for example, number of words in the individual spelling lists. Discussions were also mentioned by one teacher as a technique for evaluation of where each child was 'at'. Standardised tests and other commercial tests were considered to be unsatisfactory (four teachers). One teacher felt that the Rigby Reading Scheme helped in evaluation by enumerating the words each child knew. Intuitive knowledge about the children was considered a valid way to evaluate (six teachers). This was 'on the run' or built up from collected data. This type of evaluation was basically kept 'in the head' from observations made over a period of time. Proofreading was noted as being a valuable spelling evaluation technique (five teachers) but was thought to be difficult for some children. The school principal felt that a wide range of analytical devices should be used and that they all should be in total consonance with the psycholinguistic theory of reading.

Beliefs drawn from this analysis were:

- discussion, cloze, retelling, 'trial and error' and observation were sound evaluation techniques;

- standardised tests and commercial tests were considered unsatisfactory;
- Rigby Reading Scheme enumerated the words the children knew;
- intuitive knowledge was a valid evaluation;
- proofreading was a valuable spelling evaluation technique;
- a wide range of analytical devices that are in consonance with the theory should be used.

In practice, many evaluation techniques emerged. Most of these came under the heading of observation, either aural or visual. Some other techniques that emerged were cloze, comprehension passages with structured questions, proofreading, conferencing, teacher-made tests, samples of work, retelling, discussion and questioning.

The teachers showed concern about evaluation techniques. They were concerned about the inordinate amount of time taken for evaluation because of supposedly inefficient techniques, how much evaluation should be done and the lack of appropriateness of the techniques being used (Figure 4.5).

FIGURE 4.5

## EVALUATION PART B CORRELATION

Principles	Teacher's beliefs	Teacher's practices
Evaluation Techniques		
Reading should be enjoyable and interesting	Observation	Checklist
Selection of books	Observation	Checklist
U.S.S.R.	Observation	Checklist
Prediction	Cloze, Shared book	(Marks), checklist Cloze
Three cueing systems	Cloze, retelling	Cloze, retelling
Cloze and retelling	Cloze, retelling	Cloze, retelling
Reading makes sense	Oral reading, cloze	Cloze, retelling Comp. questions
Enjoys writing	Observation	Observation
Efficient use of time	Observation	Observation
Follow writing process	Observation	Observation
Standard dialect used	Observation	Samples of work
Factual and non factual writing.	Observation	Samples of work
Experiment with spelling	Trial and error	Samples of work
Identify errors in spelling	Observation Proofreading	Individual spelling lists, proofreading.
Use references for spelling	Observation	Proofreading
Show competency in spelling	Observation Proofreading	Writing samples Proofreading
Clarity and confidence in speaking and listening	Observation	Observation
Enjoys drama	Observation	Observation
Oral discussion across curriculum	Discussion	Discussion
Rules and routines of conversation	Discussion	Observation
Listen and absorb meaning	Observation	Discussion, questions
Enjoy listening to books	Observation	Observation
Participate in shared reading.	Observation	Choral reading
Contribute to discussion	Observation	Discussion



### 4.7.3 Correlation

In correlating the principles which indicated evaluation techniques with the teacher's beliefs, practices and concerns about literacy evaluation, it became apparent that three principles were not acknowledged. These were: 'No.8; Should be able to interpret maps and diagrams'; 'No.9; Should be able to use contents and indexes efficiently'; and 'No.25; Should choose to write in free time'. There was some disparity about tests. Five teachers saw standardised tests and teacher-made tests as unsatisfactory yet most of these teachers (three) still used teacher\_made tests and standardised tests were being used in the lower grades for the purposes of grading. Again, the teachers' concerns about evaluation were not able to be correlated with any principles.

Generally, evaluation was regarded as finite with comments such as, "the quality of writing is not necessary on the checklist as it was 'very judgemental ...(and) of very little use to future teachers.'" The checklists were checked twice a year for reports, at the end of terms two and four, even though it was considered that passing on evaluation information to the next teacher was irrelevant. This supports the finite nature of the beliefs of the teachers about the purposes of evaluation.

### 4.7.4 Discussion

A variety of evaluation techniques such as cloze, retelling, observation, discussion, trial and error, work samples and proof-reading are used for evaluation in the school, but there is a very limited amount of actual written evaluation records.

#### 4.7.5 Comment

The continual emphasis on the finite nature of evaluation is cause for concern. The items on the checklists also presented some concerns in that they were inconsistent. Only two specific reading evaluation strategies (cloze and retelling) were nominated. While 'quality of work' was omitted, details such as interpretation of maps and diagrams and use of indexes which would seem to be of minor concern were included.

#### 4.8 Literacy Evaluation: Methods of Recording

Methods of recording evaluation inevitably rely on the purpose of the evaluation.

##### 4.8.1 Principles of Evaluation Policy - Part C

Evaluation Policy Part C is the portion of the school evaluation policy that refers exclusively to methods of recording. As this is a general evaluation policy, only that recording principle pertinent to literacy was extracted:

1. A variety of techniques should be used. These should include anecdotal records, oral records, checklists, teacher made tests and peer group evaluation.

##### 4.8.2 Methods of Recording Evaluation: Teachers' Beliefs, Practices and Concerns

Work samples and checklists were believed to be an adequate method of recording evaluation. Two teachers had their own checklists but all teachers used the school checklists due to the teachers' familiarity with these lists by way of staff development. One teacher believed that a written comment was better than the tick required by the school checklist. The main purpose of this checklist was to collect information for reports while one teacher commented that he did not need that checklist when it came to reports. He had all the required information in his head. Six teachers made use of anecdotal records, three being written roughly at school and copied up later, others being written directly into evaluation folders. One teacher, in a supervisory capacity, believes that programs should contain statements of evaluation such as judgements about literacy processes. Such judgements should be made each term and should not just be the

summation of marks. One teacher felt that records were for others and not for the teacher or children. It was generally felt that written documentation was superfluous.

Beliefs drawn from this analysis were:

- work samples and checklists were an adequate method of recording evaluation;
- evaluation information could be kept in the head;
- anecdotal records were a satisfactory recording method;
- programs should contain evaluation statements;
- evaluation judgements were not just a summation of marks;
- records were for others, not the children or the teacher;
- evaluation documentation is superfluous.

Methods of recording, in practice, were checklists, anecdotal records, work samples, conferences, marks and reports to parents. The teachers were concerned about how to document evaluation and the extent to which this documentation should go. They were also concerned with the value of checklists. (Figure 4.6)

FIGURE 4.6  
EVALUATION PART C CORRELATION

Principles	Teacher's beliefs	Teacher's practices
Anecdotal records	Anecdotal records	Conferences Anecdotal records
Checklists	Checklist, ideas drawn from many sources.	School checklist, Report checklist.
Oral records.	Intuitive knowledge	Records kept in the head.
Work samples	Works sample act as records.	Work samples collected stories kept, spelling list kept.
Teacher made tests	Grade tests not only source of information Marks are subjective.	Grade tests given, marks given for cloze, proofreading.

#### 4.8.3 Correlation

In correlating this principle with the beliefs, practices and concerns of the teachers, it was found that checklists and anecdotal records were amply accommodated with some attention being paid to oral records and teacher made tests. Other recording methods used were very limited with a very high incidence of observation but with little recording of these observations. There were no principles to correlate with the belief that an evaluation statement should appear in class programs; that written documentation was superfluous. Samples of children's work were kept but this was sporadic and irregular. There was no evidence of peer group evaluation.

#### 4.8.4 Discussion

Both the policy and the teachers' beliefs, practices and concerns connected with recording methods highlighted difficulties within the field of recording evaluation. The narrowness of the one and only principle is reflected in the lack of variety in the teachers' practices.

#### 4.8.5 Comment

Recording of evaluation is tightly aligned with the purpose of evaluation; if the purpose is not clear then the frustrations displayed by the teachers through their concerns will be exacerbated.

#### 4.9. Uncorrelated Data

The uncorrelated data are those data that emerged subsequent to full correlation of all other fields. This data came from four sources, the uncorrelated principles of literacy, the uncorrelated principles of literacy evaluation, the uncorrelated beliefs and practices about literacy and the uncorrelated beliefs, practices and concerns about literacy evaluation. The categories that emerged were principles not put into practice, beliefs without policy principles and evaluation concerns.

##### 4.9.1 Principles Not in Practice

Once correlation was completed it became obvious that there were many principles in the policies that were not being implemented. Some of these principles were reflected in the teachers' beliefs and practices but there was no accommodation made for evaluation of these principles. There was no evaluatory acknowledgement for principle 'No.2.1.12; Reading should affect writing'. It was further revealed that there was no evaluatory procedure to account for the principle 'No.3.1.4; Writing should have meaning'. No accommodation was made for evaluating the following spelling principles:

4.1.1. Reading, writing and spelling are interrelated.

4.1.3. Spelling must be taught through writing.

4.1.6. Thoughts not conventions are important.

4.1.7. Spelling is more than random lists.

There were principles which emerged from the evaluation documents that were not evident in either the beliefs and practices or the policy principles. These were:

7.1.8. Should be able to interpret maps, charts and diagrams;

7.1.9. Should be able to use contents and indexes efficiently;

7.1.13. Should write in their free time.

There were also principles that were not recognised either in the teachers' beliefs and practices or in their evaluation procedures. There was no recognition of the principle 'No.2.1.10; Reading through literature should exclude fear of failure'. The writing principles for which there were no identifiable beliefs, practices or evaluation, as revealed in 4.3.2, were 'No.3.1.4 Writing should have purpose and audience' and 'No.3.1.5; Process writing should have many steps. Not all of these were attended to in each piece.' Correlation of spelling principles as in 4.4.3 ascertained that the following principles were not acknowledged either in practice or in evaluation procedures:

- 4.1.2. Spelling should have a purpose;
- 4.1.9. Pretests should be given on theme words;
- 4.1.11. Within spelling there should be levels of progress.

#### 4.9.2 Beliefs and Practices without Policy Principles

After correlation, it became evident that there were many beliefs that the teachers held that were not accounted for in the policy principles. Some of these were in line with the psycholinguistic theory expounded by the school and some were not. Those in line with this theory as revealed in 4.2.3 were:

- 1. Reading is not a word perfect activity;
- 2. Home background helps.

Further beliefs and practices not recognised in the writing policy as reported in 4.3.3 were:

- 1. Children need to be confident about their writing;



2. Children need to have a good attitude about writing;
3. Children have individual styles of writing;
4. Quality is important;
5. Scribing and copywriting help with conventions.

As revealed in spelling in 4.4.3 there were three uncorrelated beliefs:

1. Children have varying abilities;
2. Children should be able to use resources to check their spelling;
3. Children need to develop confidence and independence.

Those beliefs and practices as revealed in 4.2.3 that were contrary to the theory purported by the principles were:

1. Reading is blending;
2. Memorizing helps confidence;
3. Beginning readers learn individual words first;
4. Use of word lists, word matching activities and Rigby Reading Scheme.

and in 4.4.3 were:

1. Word attack skills and phonics are important;
2. Use of safe words indicates good spellers and writers;

Some of the beliefs were specifically about evaluation. These, as reported in 4.6.2 and 4.8.2 were:

1. Evaluation makes teachers aware of what they are teaching;
2. Evaluation statements are necessary in programs;
3. Written evaluation is superfluous;

#### 4.9.3 Evaluation Concerns

Many evaluation concerns emerged from the uncorrelated data. These were concerns expressed by the teachers about many aspects of the evaluation process. Those specifically pertaining to purpose, as recorded in 4.6.2, were:

1. Lack of follow up in evaluation;
2. The motive for extensive written evaluation;
3. How and what to document and to what extent.

Those specifically pertaining to techniques, as recorded in 4.7.2, were:

1. Evaluation is time consuming;
2. How much evaluation should be done;
3. How suitable are the current evaluation techniques.

Those specifically pertaining to recording, as revealed in 4.8.2, were:

1. The feeling that too much evaluation accomplishes nothing;
2. The fact that it is difficult to decide the gradings for the parent reports;
3. Checklists are not developmental.

#### 4.9.4 Discussion

The purpose of evaluation is not clear to the teachers and general lack of knowledge of the actual policies with the exception of literature, spelling and the evaluation checklists has resulted in many areas being uncorrelated.

#### 4.9.5 Comment

The categories and their content reflect the current status of the school in regard to policy development, the teachers' understanding of the expounded theory and evaluation itself. Lack of purpose raised many doubts, depleting the teachers' confidence in existing evaluation processes and giving negative reactions to the possibility of any future work in this area..

#### 4.10. Summary

Many literacy principles were correlated with the teachers' beliefs and practices. However there was indication that the recommended psycholinguistic theory was not completely in place. The individual child was well catered for in the classroom practices but the principles did not emphasise this practice. Attitude was another strong point that was evident within the beliefs and practices but not within the principles. Purpose in both writing and spelling needs attention and greater depth of understanding will be necessary for the fields of speaking and listening to develop adequately.

The belief that evaluation has several purposes was evident but generally speaking, this was not put into practice. The belief that evaluation is primarily for accountability was reflected in the methods of recording evaluation and the use to which these records were put. The finite nature of the evaluation practices is cause for concern as is the narrowness of the range of evaluation techniques.

The uncorrelated data supported the fact that psycholinguistic theory was not fully implemented. It also demonstrated the need for further work in policy implementation. The evaluation concerns emphasise the necessity for clarification of the purposes of evaluation and a need for a shift of emphasis in regard to both evaluation techniques and recording methods.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.1 Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between the values reflected in the principles contained in the school literacy policy and those reflected in teacher's beliefs and practices in the classroom.

This study has developed a set of procedures for curriculum analysis which will enable school personal to make explicit the instances in which review, revision and adaptation are needed. Through implementation of the recommendations that emerged in this study, teacher's will be able to further establish credibility with the community by justifying the literacy programs already in operation and by modifying or extending their programs to bring them in line with the school literacy policies.

#### 5.2 Principle Findings from Correlated Data

As the main thrust of this study is to show the relationship between one school's literacy principles and its literacy evaluation practices, it seems pertinent to initiate the findings and conclusions by first examining the school's literacy policy and the teachers' views about literacy in the classroom. Next, the school's literacy evaluation documents and the teachers' beliefs, practices and concerns

in regard to literacy evaluation were be investigated. These two aspects encapsulate the premises developed throughout the study which in turn show the relationship between the school's literacy principles and its literacy evaluation practices.

### 5.2.1 Literacy

This thesis has been concerned with a case study of ten teachers in one Australian urban primary school. Initially, findings resultant from the correlated principles were drawn out of the data and issues arising from these findings were discussed. Uncorrelated data were then considered. In order to examine the school's literacy policy and the teacher's views about literacy in the classroom each literacy component had to be investigated at both policy and classroom level.

#### 5.2.1.1 Reading

The reading policy principles were shown to support the psycholinguistic theory purported by the New South Wales Department of Education. The policy emphasised such theoretical issues as 'meaning should be integral in the reading process', 'reading should be an interactive process' and 'reading should be a cognitive activity'. The majority of teachers (six out of ten) believed that this theory base was important, endorsing the staff development program organised to implement this portion of the literacy policy. The teachers' beliefs and practices confirmed this issue with a heavy emphasis being placed on whole texts and interesting literature. However, contrary to the policy and therefore to the psycholinguistic theory some of the teachers (two) were still exhibiting practices that supported a behaviourist theory in that they programmed for phonics drill and word attack skills. This indicated that each teacher had a different level

of understanding and knowledge despite a common input. The notion of individual rates of learning, as substantiated by these findings, indicates the need for continued staff development programs that assist in the growth of each teacher toward the goal of optimum understanding of the theory base and its practical application.

#### 5.2.1.2 Writing

The writing policy, while not currently under development having been written in 1985, still emphasised the current process, not product, orientation mandated by the Department of Education in the Writing K-12 Syllabus issued in 1988 to all schools. While the policy is not being currently inserviced, practical application of the writing premises were being implemented. Again, the core of understanding was shown to be at varying levels. Most teachers engaged their classes in daily writing exercises but some were experiencing difficulty with the balance between quality and quantity and still others exhibited doubts about publishing and the standards attained.

#### 5.2.1.3 Spelling

As with the two previous policies, the spelling policy supported the psycholinguistic theory. It is interesting to note that there was, in spelling as in reading, a residue of teachers whose beliefs and practices did not support this theory. The concept of the attributes of a good speller varied greatly, indicating an inconsistent theory base. This must be disappointing to the school executive as many hours of staff development have gone into this aspect of literacy.

#### 5.2.1.4 Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening were examined throughout the study but due to the lack of a policy in this area, further analysis was not considered. It would appear, however, that in both speaking and listening, product not process was deemed more important. This was evident in such comments as, 'speakers need to speak clearly and audibly' and 'children needed to be confident when speaking'. Little, if any attention was paid to the aspect that the classroom may not provide the atmosphere that would encourage children to speak with purpose and, therefore, with confidence.

#### 5.2.2 Literacy Evaluation

To further show the relationship between the literacy policy principles and the literacy evaluation practices, the school's literacy evaluation documents and the teachers' beliefs, practices and concerns in regard to literacy evaluation needed to be investigated. The evaluation documents were divided into three main categories, purpose of evaluation, techniques of evaluation and methods of recording evaluation.

##### 5.2.2.1 Purpose of Evaluation

The principles pertaining to the purposes of evaluation were extracted from the general school policy. These principles emphasised the many purposes of evaluation and generally the teachers believed these purposes to be accurate. In practice, however, evaluation had a very singular purpose; that of accountability. Some standardised tests and teacher-made tests, with the only results being a set of numbers, were evident. Interestingly, Goodman (1979) describes such tests as 'anchors against progress'. Even though many of the

evaluation methods recommended by Kemp (1986), Goodman (1979) and Unsworth (1985) were being used, the result still channelled evaluation towards accountability. This practice emphasises the need to look further for more integrated evaluation methods that are in consonance with the believed purposes.

#### 5.2.2.2 Evaluation Techniques

In examining the evaluation technique principles, the three literacy evaluation checklists were investigated. The items on the checklist revealed inconsistencies with weight being placed, for example, on only two reading evaluation techniques; cloze and retelling. Surely, as indicated in the review of related literature, there are many techniques of equal, if not better quality that should be considered. Observation was inherent in many of the principles but there were no real guidelines that should or could be used to evaluate specific principles. The vast majority of principles (twenty out of twenty four) relied solely on observation. While Goodman (1982) highly recommends observation as a mode of evaluation, Johnston (1987b) points out the dangers of observation. The study revealed that most observations were informal and 'on the run' with little record being kept. While the value of 'in the head' records is recognised, the erosive nature of these records and the lack of specificity needed for detailed evaluation as discussed by Groundwater-Smith and Nicoll (1980) should be taken into consideration. The finite nature of evaluation was emphasised in this category, supporting the previously discussed purpose of evaluation. This purpose in practice was accountability. Once the accounting was done, the information was of no further value, thereby affirming the notion that techniques used rely heavily on the purposes of evaluation as seen by the teacher. It



also became obvious that the items on the checklist needed further examination. The imbalance between conventions and quality needs inspection as does the limited nomination of particular techniques.

#### 5.2.2.3 Methods of Recording

The principles indicating methods of recording were also extracted from the general school evaluation policy. In fact there was only one such principle. This in itself is limiting although several recording modes were mentioned within this one principle. Again, an affiliation with the purpose of evaluation was noted. Checklists, particularly the school checklists, were used consistently with anecdotal records being used to a lesser degree. Samples of children's work were kept and would, as such, offer a valuable source of diagnostic information but only limited uses of this material were recognised.

#### 5.2.3 Conclusions

In examining the findings involving the correlated principles, it was found that there was a need for continued staff development. Such input would broaden the teachers' theory base and develop sound classroom practices giving them the constant support they require. The need to reassess the items on the checklists was indicated to overcome the imbalance shown between many items. Further attention also needs to be given to the general evaluation policy to bring it in line with current thinking and to assist the teachers in the development of their understanding of the evaluation process.

### 5.3 Principle Findings from Uncorrelated Data

The uncorrelated data, as intimated in the design of the study, became the emerging focus of the study. It is through this data that future direction of evaluation practices will be recognised. Three categories emerged from this data: principles not in practice; beliefs and practices without policy principles; and unresolved evaluation concerns.

#### 5.3.1 Principles not in Practice

The first set of 'principles not in practice' were principles for which there was no evaluation practices. The majority of these were spelling. Despite the quantity of reference to spelling in the literacy checklists (four of the eight items in the writing checklist (Appendix 2) there seemed to be a high incidence of uncorrelated spelling principles indicating the need for further policy alignment. The specifics of the data revealed that it would be appropriate for a whole literacy/language aspect to be taken. These findings are supported by Cambourne (1986) and Kemp (1986) in reiterating the shift in literacy learning. There was some indication that whole language learning was occurring in the classrooms with the realisation, for example, that reading should affect writing, but with separate policies for each literacy component, the notion of whole language cannot be substantiated. The data showed that the teachers realised: that spelling should be taught through writing; that writing should have meaning; that thoughts, not conventions, should be important; and that reading should affect writing but there was no evidence if, or how, any of these principles were to be evaluated. Decisions need to be made about evaluation techniques in order to validate these principles. The principle stating that 'spelling should be more that

random lists' needs to be discussed in the light of current practices. It is a principle that reinforces the psycholinguistic theory but there is no evidence of how it fits in relation to a whole language policy.

Three further principles that were uncorrelated were those that appeared in the evaluation document but were not supported by any literacy policy principles or teacher beliefs. All three were of minor significance in the fields of reading and writing. They placed emphasis on important but minor issues when compared with other items on the checklist. This presented an imbalance in the checklist that needs to be addressed.

There were a total of six principles that held no reference in either the teachers' beliefs and practices or in any evaluation procedures. These principles indicated that both writing and spelling must have purpose. It is interesting to note that this issue supports the thesis of Curtis (1987). This is an issue that must be pursued and developed through inservicing the teachers in the understandings of the writing process. This inservicing will assist teachers in eradicating the incongruencies in the writing principles. The teachers may believe that spelling and writing have purpose but unless they convey this purpose to the children, literacy learning becomes irrelevant. Two of the spelling principles (No.4.4.1.9) 'Pretests should be given on theme words' and (No.4.4.1.11) 'Within spelling there should be different levels of progress' need to be investigated in the light of current practices in order to make decisions about their relevance.

### 5.3.2 Beliefs and Practices without Principles

Nineteen beliefs and practices constituted this data. Three separate aspects emerged from these beliefs. Many (ten of nineteen) were beliefs that were in consonance with the psycholinguistic theory. Because the teachers believe these to be important, and the fact that they support the psycholinguistic theory, indicates the need for consideration of augmenting the current policy with principles aligned with these beliefs. Once these principles are formed, evaluation techniques to accommodate these principles need to be developed.

Three beliefs were specifically about evaluation. The belief 'Written evaluation is superfluous' reinforces the fact that the purposes of evaluation needs to be considered. If teachers believe that 'evaluation makes teachers aware of what they are teaching' then decisions must be made to accommodate this belief. It was found that some beliefs were contrary to psycholinguistic theory. These need to be examined and decisions made as to their value.

### 5.3.3 Unresolved Evaluation Concerns

The final category to be considered was that of unresolved evaluation concerns. The findings revealed that three aspects emerged, purpose of evaluation; evaluation techniques; and recording evaluation. It was found that the teachers were confused about the purpose of evaluation as indicated earlier in these findings. It appears that this is not unusual, even expected, according to Kemp (1987).

Concerns about evaluation techniques and the fact that current evaluation techniques are time consuming, emphasised the need for a shift in responsibility. The children themselves are very capable evaluators or 'co-investigators'. Both Johnston (1987b) and Canale (1987) support this finding with emphasis being placed on good management of time and maximum returns on this time once teachers place the responsibility for learning squarely on the shoulders of the children. Part of this responsibility is the evaluation of their own work. Further to this, the belief that evaluation should be an integral part of teaching and learning is an aspect on which to focus. It is interesting to note that this notion is supported by Johnston's (1987b) premise of naturalistic evaluation.

It was also found that the teachers had concerns about methods of recording evaluation. They were concerned that too much evaluation achieved nothing, that gradings for reports to parents were difficult and that the checklists were not developmental. To know what is enough and what is too much evaluation would be a decision for the gods. The amount of evaluation required is directly connected with the purpose of evaluation. Again, further staff development is needed to establish ways in which evaluation might be recorded in line with its purpose. Grading for reports is a delicate matter and raises many issues, not the least of which are the purposes of reports and the purposes of grading. The issue of reporting is an area in which there is still much research to be done. At this school decisions have to be made as to the value of grading and what does this grading tell the parents.

The fact that doubts are being raised about the checklists indicates that their value may not be as good as first thought. The failure of checklists to show development in fact reverses the notion that evaluation is to assist in decision making and future planning. While they are recognised by Groundwater-Smith and Nicoll (1980) and Kemp (1986), their actual value is yet to be realised.

#### 5.3.4 Conclusions

The focii that have emerged from the uncorrelated data indicates that the existing literacy policies need to be co-ordinated into one whole language policy in order to emphasise the 'wholeness' of literacy. Principles that are deemed worthy of being included in the policy need to be supported by both practices and evaluation strategies. Principles can only become beliefs when the teachers internalise the theory that supports the principle, a further reason for continuing staff development. The literacy evaluation checklists need further scrutiny in order to develop consistency and balance of the items.

Purpose is an issue that needs to be addressed on many fronts. The teacher needs to convey the purpose of literacy to the children and the teachers themselves need to understand the purposes of evaluation in order to adequately evaluate the children. Carefully planned staff development should help establish these purposes.

Diligent and informed decisions need to be made in regard to the teachers' beliefs. They need to question whether their practice represents the theory the policy supports. They need to deliberate how principles evolving from teachers beliefs can be evaluated.

Economical use of time needs to be investigated and evaluation techniques need to be developed that are integrated with teaching learning experiences. Consideration needs to be given to the notion of children as co-investigators of their own learning.

#### 5.4 Implications for the Profession

As a result of this study three issues emerged that have implication for the profession of teaching as it relates to evaluation and implementation of school literacy policies. These issues are policy, purpose and practice.

##### 5.4.1 Policy

Writing and implementing policies in schools requires expertise and understanding. Even though in the future, through the notion of constant change, school based curriculum development and therefore policy writing may not have the specific emphasis it has now, it is important that the connection between policy and practice be maintained. In order to do this a strong and consistent theory base is required for teachers. As with children, it became evident in this study, that teachers are at different stages of development understanding at both theoretical and practical levels. One of many ways to address this problem in teacher development is constant inserviceing. This needs to take several forms and be at several levels all of which should be integrated: some practice, some theory, but always with the obvious connections between theory and practice being evident. Once the theory/practice issue is valued then the need for correlation between policy and practice will be seen as essential.

#### 5.4.2 Purpose

Knowledge about practice is of little value if the purpose is not evident. This was clearly demonstrated at many levels during the effectuation of this study. Teachers need to see the purpose in the policies devised, the practices they employ and the evaluation procedures they carry out in order for any of these activities to be valued. The teachers themselves, have to make explicit, to the children, the purposes of classroom procedures so that learning may be valued by the children. Both executive and teachers need to consider the 'real' purposes of learning as opposed to 'school' purposes, as being the prime emphasis of their teaching and learning. If the purposes of learning are limited to 'school' purposes then the learning process becomes introverted, devoid of meaning and non-transferable to the world beyond the school gate.

#### 5.4.3 Practice

The other issue that became evident during this study was that the teachers placed great emphasis on classroom practices, nominating them as being the most important aspect of teaching. Any additional requirements such as evaluation were seen as infringements on time better spent in the classroom. Teachers felt constrained by time. They were constantly aware that policy development, inservicing, unless it is about classroom practice, and documentation were a waste of time. Basically they did not see the connection between policy and practice. One of the most important issues here is time management. This is particularly evident in this study as the teachers saw themselves as the sole 'dispensers' of evaluation. The concepts of teachers and children being co-investigators and peer and self evaluation need to be developed along with the idea that evaluation is



best done integral to the teaching/learning activities, not separate from them. These concepts will assist the classroom practitioner to better manage his/her time and to value their co-workers, the children.

If the policies in the school are to reflect the teachers values then the concepts of policy, purpose and practice must be investigated. Without such investigation incongruencies between policy and practice will continue to greatly disadvantage all those involved in education.

#### 5.5 Recommendations for Further Research.

Following from the above findings, it is recommended that this study be replicated in a similar school to confirm the factors involving the mismatches between the values reflected in the principles contained in school literacy policies and those reflected in the teachers' beliefs and practices. Further research is needed to investigate staff development strategies that will pursue the purposes and functions of evaluation practices in the classroom. Teaching learning strategies that encourage the children to be co-investigators needs to be studied in order to maximise the evaluation potential of the children themselves. The field of reporting to parents is one that greatly effects evaluation and therefore requires careful research to overcome the problems of purpose and product.

This study not only brought to notice various aspects of literacy principles and literacy evaluation practices in one school it also established a process whereby other schools in the process of developing a literacy curriculum can develop their own procedures.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **STAFF MEETING NOTES**

Staff Meeting, Lurnea Public School 7/5/87

Meeting opened 0815.

This meeting was chaired by Gary. All teachers plus the principal and the researcher were present.

This meeting was the final of a series of three that were held to discuss the literary evaluation checklists and make decisions about the items to be included in them. The reading and writing checklists were at final draft stage and the speaking, listening checklist was under review at this meeting.

This checklist was discussed with reference being made to each item in turn.

Item 1. The child speaks clearly and confidently with - partner - small group - whole class - other teachers.

The relevance of the children being able to speak to other teachers was discussed as was the ability of the teachers to be able to "judge" this item. It was felt that if a child could talk to their class teacher it was highly likely that the child would talk to other teachers. It was decided that reference to other teacher be deleted and class teacher be substituted.

Item 2. The child enjoys listening to others.

Item 3. Participates willingly in speech activities.

These were both deleted as these were, they felt, covered in item 1.

It was decided that item 4, enjoys listening to tapes, was not necessary and item 5, enjoys being read to, was covered in the reading checklist.

Item 6. Enjoys oral drama activities/participates willingly.

It was decided that this item be left as it was.

Item 7. Can retell stories accurately/confidently.

This item was already accounted for in the reading checklist.

There was some discussion as to the meaning of item 8, can give an opinion on a topic. It was decided that it was covered by item 1.

Item 9. Listens carefully to gain meaning.

This item needed clarification as it was not clear how listening carefully could be assessed. Listening and following directions was discussed as a possible substitute but the idea the listening meant more than being able to follow directions was put forward. Discussion about giving opinion and keeping on the topic re-emerged and further discussion was deferred.

Item 10. Respects class rules relating to - speaking - listening - group discussion - conferencing.

Item 11. Can imitate characters in - role play - play reading.

These two items were deleted and it was decided that item 12, is aware of appropriate language was the same as, has control over standard dialect, and so was deleted as it was covered in the writing checklist.

Item 13. Can contribute orally to discussion in Social Studies and Natural Science.

Basically this item remained. Social Studies and Natural Science were deleted and, across syllabuses within the curriculum, was added.

It was decided that item 14, understands speaker/listener rules/routines, be changed to respect rather than understand as you can't understand if you don't respect.

Further discussion followed about item 9 and it was decided that listens, absorbs meaning and acts upon them, should be the final item.

The items suggested were restated and it was decided that these items should constitute the speaking and listening evaluation checklist.

The meeting closed at 0855.

## APPENDIX 2

### INITIAL EVALUATION CHECKLISTS

TERM 1 WEEK 6

READING

1 = to a great extent.

Enjoyment The child :

\*Shows an interest in books

\*Enjoys listening to books

\*Is willing to "share" personal reading experiences

\*Selects suitable material during U.S.S.R.

\*Is engaged with reading during the entire U.S.S.R. Session

\*Reads at home as a leisure activity

\*Reads as a "free" time activity at school

\*Borrows readily from the library

Skills/Strategies

\*Can read own writing

\*Can predict from cover/title/pictures

\*Participates in shared reading

\*Predicts unknown words using - semantic

- syntactic

- graphophonic clues

\*Demands that reading makes sense

Can predict outcomes at - whole text level

- chapter level

\*Reads for both - pleasure

- information

\*Shows proficiency with cloze reading techniques.

Across Curriculum

\*Knows location of books in the classroom

\*Is able to use classroom resources for information

\*Can interpret maps/charts/diagrams

\*Uses a dictionary efficiently.

\*Uses contents and indexes efficiently

\*Participates in classroom Individualized Reading Instruction Program efficiently.

1	2	3	4	5
	✓			
	✓			
	✓			
	✓			
		✓		
		✓		
		✓		
	✓			
		✓		
		✓		
	✓			
	✓			
		✓		
		✓		
	✓			
	✓			

Gong

TERM 1 WEEK 1WRITING

1 = to a great extent.

Enjoyment The child :

	1	2	3	4	5
*Enjoys writing		/			
*Likes to read own and others writing		/			
*Chooses to write in free time			/		
*Will experiment with spelling	/				
*Will experiment with new forms of writing			/		
*Spends writing time productively			/		
<u>Skills/Strategies</u>					
*Demonstrates an understanding of - drafting		/			
- revising		/			
- editing		/			
- publishing		/			
*Shows an awareness of conventions in - spelling		/			
- punctuation			/		
*Is an independent editor			/		
<u>Across Curriculum</u>					
*Displays an understanding of the organisation of - narrative			/		
- informative text			/		
*Writes on both - "real" topics			/		
- "pretend" topics		/			
*Can write observations, thoughts and feelings in SS/NS		/			
*Attempts different forms of writing			/		





## APPENDIX 3

### SAMPLE OF INTERVIEWS

Interview 2.4.87 Sue, teacher O.F. class Year 5/6

#### WHAT IS EVALUATION?

Its making you aware of what you are teaching the kids.  
There are two forms of evaluation.

1. Evaluation of material - whether it is appropriate or whether the children are interested and

2. Evaluation to see if the children understand what you have taught them or not - whether that is through enjoyment, to see if they are motivated - whether they can give it back to you.

What I look for is if they are interested. Are they willing to go and look for r another book and talk about it, I guess. However you evaluate you have to look haw the kids respond to that evaluation. No use looking at detailed analysis for them.

#### WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN YOU EVALUATE READING?

Interest is the first thing and then the very basic skills. I guess I'm interested in whether or not they can know what is the front of the book the back of the book, up and down. Can they turn a page - basic book handling skills to start with. Can they follow the text.

#### WHAT WOULD YOU CLASSIFY AS BASIC SKILLS?

Attempting to have a go. I do teach phonics - thats not really what it is - I guess its.... letter knowledge would be the best way of putting it. They have to learn to write. I notice that they know some of the letters when they read. Whether thats going to work I dont know. Its really trial and error. They like it. They're interested in it. Word attack skills .... they dont really have any.

#### WHAT PLACE DOES READING FOR MEANING HAVE FOR THESE CHILDREN?

Reading for meaning for them is reading signs ... STOP... BUS 37.... TOILET all those things. They have problems reading their own personal lists. We use Gary's method (a super spelling strategy) we are not using it for spelling, we are using them for sight words - each child has their own word list - some children have trouble with only two words. Kids now go and get Big Books... modeling what I do, they all like this. A positive attitude that's what I look for. Thats most important, a positive attitude.

#### HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THEIR READING?

Mostly observation and anecdotal records. The other thing I do is a form of miscue. The children 'write' their own story with my help and read it back to see if they can read it. The other thing I have is a basic word list. They dont learn it. I check it off when they know the words. A kind of check list.

WHAT OBSERVATIONS DO YOU MAKE IN YOUR ANECDOTAL RECORDS?

Their interests, their print awareness. Gary's evaluation ( a check list). Thats really not applicable, somethings you can use.

WHAT USE DO YOU MAKE OF THESE RECORDS?

Mainly for my own records of their progress.

WHAT VALUE DO YOU SEE IN STANDARDISED TESTS?

Placement have to be made occasionally. I have used Daniels and Diack but not here. Teacher tend to use them as a measure of their teaching. Teachers depend on them to much. It doesnt allow them to develop.

WHERE DO YOU CHILDREN GO AT THE END OF THE YEAR?

Children in my class go hopefully to an integrated High School some go to an S.S.P.

DO YOU SEND THEIR RECORDS ON?

Yes but I dont get any feedback. They consist of anecdotal records their writing. Children much prefer to read their own writing.

HAVE YOU A SPECIFIC FORM FOR YOUR ANECDOTAL RECORDS?

No, just comments.

HAVE YOU ANY IDEAL NOTION OF EVALUATION? WHAT MIGHT BE THE PERFECT EVALUATION?

It depends on the purpose. If its for an outside agency you do need a test. They wont accept anecdotal records.

AS A SUPERVISOR, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT AS FAR AS EVALUATION FORM OTHER TEACHERS ARE CONCERNED?

We talked about it and we agree that what I'm doing is similar for everyone.

DO YOU THINK THEY KEEP UP WITH THEIR RECORDS?

With a maximum of nine in the class - only five at present - its not too difficult. It would be hard in a regular classroom...hard to keep up. It would be very important for a child having trouble.....its very hard to comment regularly on 30 kids.

When I taught in a normal class at the end of the term I would make

records. If you were expected to do that for each child you would never get it done. I think its useful but its very difficult. Perhaps a checklist of skills and when needed anecdotal records.

HOW DO THE PARENTS VIEW THE TYPE OF EVALUATION YOU ARE DOING?

I've had no feedback form parents. They get their report which has an attitudinal scale and written comments. Some parents are confused and lack understanding of the attitude score. They have a low expectation of their childs reading ability. A communication book to parents goes home on a continual basis but the comments are fairly general.

HOW DO THE CHILDREN FEEL ABOUT READING, SAY TO YOU?

They dont worry. It could be very threatening. If the kids are having trouble I just stop... if they cant cope.

WHAT IS YOUR PROCESS OF READING?

Well I suppose its literature based and child based....their own literature. We use Big Books to introduce a topic. We talk about it for support.

I spend a lot of time talking with the children. Correct language should be used as communication skills are important. They have great difficulty in sticking to a topic.. Living skills are very important too.

DO YOU THEIR LIVING SKILLS EXPERIENCES AS A BASIS FOR THEIR READING?

No. I feel that would confuse them .... give them to much.

SUE 7.5.87

DO YOU ACTUALLY HAVE A RANGE OF ABILITY IN YOUR O.F. CLASS?

I used to but that's changed there is not such a range now particularly in language.

WHO WOULD YOU SAY WOULD BE YOUR BEST READER?

I would say the most consistent would be Zena. Maybe Denis as well but he is so inconsistent sometimes they'll be good and sometimes not.

WHAT SORT OF THINGS WOULD HELP YOU MAKE THE DECISION THAT THEY ARE GOOD READERS?

Their confidence...their ability to open up at the front of the book and to go from one page to the next...to know where the beginning of the text and where the end is...pointing to each word and to be able to actually read the story.. Sometimes if you are reading it they will read along with you or have a go on their own. Just all those really basic things...their concentration tends to be better than others.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Probably they'll talk a lot more about the pictures.

WITH WRITING HAVE YOU GOT SOMEONE THAT'S A GOOD WRITE?

I would say they're all on a par with their writing. Not so much in what they're giving back to you. Again they are up and down ... one day you'll get a sentence from one kid and several from another....a couple of them are beginning to use real words not necessarily the right one but they're putting them in. Brian is still using symbols but sometimes you'll get three or four from him. Denis is the one who was most words...actually its usually just Denis written over and over again whereas the others have little.....they're very similar. Its hard to distinguish.

WHAT THEN DO YOU FEEL WOULD CONSTITUTE A GOOD WRITER IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.

I think at this stage and I really believe that with all kids getting into writing at this stage....a good writer is one that is willing to try .....when they read it back to you if it flows its great.....I really think that all I look for and then obviously follows on from that. If they can remember and read what you scribe for them.

DO YOU ALWAYS SCRIBE FOR THEM?

Yes we only do diaries....we try to do it every day but it doesn't always happen. They enjoy doing it.... they all write.

SO IN DOING THE DIARY WRITING THEN DOES THAT MEAN ITS ABOUT SOMETHING THEY HAVE DONE?

It generally is I don't care what it is... I link it in with the date and all that stuff but because they are still at that stage of a three year old that's all they write about....about I....about their family...those experiences that little kids talk about. Sometimes we'll do directed stories. Story writing particularly if we're doing a big book. Its very hard for them to relax with their language skills being so poor and their vocabulary so limited. They find it very difficult. The other sort of writing that we do is class stories and again we do them together.

WHO'D BE YOUR BEST SPELLER THEN AMONG THOSE CHILDREN?

Brian's a disaster. Suzanne left otherwise I'd say Suzanne but she's been promoted to the O.A. class. The two kids who will try to spell are probably Andrea and Zena and they'll use.....sometimes they'll use initial sounds. Now they've started to use ....I don't care if they just use symbols once they have an awareness of a word those symbols come together... There's one lot then there's another lot....That's definitely what I used to do when I took kindergarten...so it would carry over with these kids.

NOW SUZANNE WAS YOU BEST SPELLER BEFORE...WHAT SORT OF THINGS WERE YOU LOOKING FOR WITH HER?

She was spacing ....she was starting to think about beginning sounds...looking back in her book to find words. She may not have used the right one and looking for words around the room...if she was writing the day of the week she'd look it up...very limited of course..

DO YOU HAVE ANY ABILITY GROUPING IN YOUR CLASS?

I've only got four children now. What I try to do ..we might do a core book and the level of activities....you can write individually for the kids ...basically they do the same activity which is developed up or down according to their ability.

IF YOU GOT SOMEONE NEW INTO THE CLASS HOW WOULD YOU GAGE WHAT ACTIVITIES TO GIVE THEM?

Probably what I've always done. Talk to the kiddies first of all to see how much they understand. I'm still not convinced about needing to teach those kids to read before they can speak and then I think I give them the same as what the other kiddies do and see how they go. I guess its instinct or sixth sense. That sort of feeling...I don't do anything specific. Trial and error is probably the best way. But even so I could do something and the kids can do it one day and not be able to do it the next. You get to see a gradual progress.

WHEN YOU'RE TALKING TO THEM WHAT SORT OF THINGS ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

Whether they can answer a directed question ...follow a conversation with you . Whether they've got eye contact. Whether they've got all the basic conversation skills.

WHAT ARE THEY?

Tone, voice.....volume. Whether their conversation flows ...whether they answer in monosyllables ...whether they echo what you say. They have to be aware of personal space. whether they can start a conversation and continue it

I NOTICED IN THE STAFF MEETING YOU WANTED TO RETAIN THE ONE ABOUT COMPETENCE IN TALKING TO OTHER TEACHERS. HOW DO YOU SEE THAT WITH YOUR LOT?

A lot of them.....the problem with the kids is that they're in a protected classroom and sometimes it is a battle to get them to speak to you initially....even now I say to Zena for instance and she'll just sit there and look at me and I think its important for their social development and their over all development for them to go and talk to other teachers not just myself.

DO YOU SEE THAT AS SPECIFIC TO O.F. AND O.A. CHILDREN?

No I think that its important for all kids to be able to have the self confidence to go up and talk to someone. This is particularly important with O.F kids. They have to make their needs known. If they're lost or something they have to be able to tell someone what's wrong.

WITH THEIR LISTENING SKILLS ...HAVE YOU ANYONE IN THERE THAT SHINES AS FAR AS THEIR LISTENING SKILLS ARE CONCERNED?

Which end of the scale would you like. Would you like to hear about Brian and the red box. In front of my desk there is a cupboard there is a red box. I said to Brian, 'go and get me the books in the red box please' he walked over leaned over the red box and got a rubber He couldn't find the red box...after about three minutes I said 'Brian find the smarties' Bang ...straight to it. 'Put you hand on that shelf and move it along. The red box is on the same self as the smarties' he was looking on the floor...all over. Eventually one of the others showed him where the red box was.

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT HAPPENED?

There was a lot of instruction in it Suzanne would have done it, no trouble at all. Zena would probably do it. Denis ..depending on what day it was. They all have moments like that.

DO YOU THINK ITS A LISTENING THING OR A PERCEPTUAL THING?

Well they're poor at listening anyway. They just don't understand. I'm sure that their receptive language is not as good as it should be. Auditory sequencing...I think ...they cue into all the non verbal clues first. Maybe its because they are not made to listen and carry out instructions at home. Listening is a training thing.

SPEAKING IS VERY IMPORTANT TO THESE CHILDREN ISN'T IT? WHO IS YOUR BEST SPEAKER. WHO COULD CARRY OUT SOME OF THOSE THINGS THAT ARE ON THAT LIST WE WERE TALKING ABOUT AT THE STAFF MEETING?

Mmmmm for very short periods of time Denis..but he quickly loses track of what you're saying.

SO WHAT DOES HE DO THAT ENABLES YOU TO MAKE THAT DECISION?

Well he really ...Just from talking to him he can talk about a lot of things. He has a fairly good general knowledge..he seems to do a lot of things... He's not worried about going up and talking to somebody but if you turn around and ask him...he's a little slow but he will answer..He's almost to the stage were he'll say I don't know if he doesn't the answer. Probably Denis ...Zena doesn't have the skill of eye contact. In a group with the others she's fine. Denis is able to start conversation. Brian good in general conversation but not directed.

DO YOU EVER SEND ANY WORK HOME WITH THEM?

No for tow reasons. I think the kids have had it when they get home. If the parents were to ask for something I would . The only thing I do send home is their individual words ..their personal vocabulary. Its just an exercise to make them think.

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT THE CHILDREN TO DO WITH THOSE WORDS?

I just want them to go over them a couple of times...read to the kids

ON YOUR REPORTS DO YOU HAVE THE SOME GRADING AS THE REST OF THE SCHOOL?

No we O.F. & O.A.'s have A...working well and B...could do better.

HOW DO YOU WORK OUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A. AND B.?

You know the kids..just knowing them you know if they are doing the best they can do ...I don't put it so much on what they achieve but the effort they put into it.

IF A CHILD IS NOT DOING AS WELL AS HE COULD WHY DO YOU THINK THIS IS?

These kids.....Probably sheer laziness ...learned helplessness. 'If I don't do it someone will do it for me'....We've all got strategies to get out of things we don't want to do.



WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE SCHOOL POLICY WRITTEN OR UNWRITTEN AS FAR AS LANGUAGE IS CONCERNED?

We haven't got testing for language just teacher observation and collecting samples.

WHEN YOU COLLECT SAMPLES OF WRITING WHAT DO YOU LOOK AT?

Whether they have a beginning and an ending. How they set it out.. across the page...down the page. Whether they're using invented spelling and again too I don't place a lot of emphasis on it with these kids...they're not even going to be writers so I look at the content of what they've said when they retell it to you. So they still develop a love of writing. They love to write and I get really angry with people who say kids won't write. I've had kinder kids who were really scared to put things down on paper. It's really your attitude. Brian loves to write so does Denis..Zena does too.

INTERVIEW, BETH. 2.4.87, 7 YEARS OUT OF COLLEGE (GOULBURN) Year 1. Most casual work with Primary.

WHAT SORT OF READING ACTIVITIES DO YOU DO IN THE CLASSROOM?

I base my reading activities on a book, for example The Little Red Hen. I work on a fortnightly cycle. We do poems and songs about the book. We read the book, muck up with the book a bit. then we have four rotating groups activities over eight days. They work through those. We have sequencing activity and a 'yes' and 'no' answer stencil, a cut and paste activity. I cant think of the other groups. Anyway I have four activities that change with each book and I also have four constant activities. These include listening post and a 'sound' activity.

I run parallel the Rigby Scheme. Rigby skill builders. They do something with a Rigby book. I've been getting them to make a little book they can take home and read. This way they get their individual work. The better ones zoom of at their own pace. It tells me how they are going.

DO YOU USE THIS ACTIVITY AS AN EVALUATORY TOOL?

I haven't started Rigby with the firsts yet but I will be starting them this week. it will be an evaluatory thing as the further they get in the scheme the better readers they are. It helps me to see if they are comprehending. They have to do it by themselves.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF READING?

Enjoyment, enjoyment of reading.

WHAT PLACE DOES MEANING HAVE IN READING?

I think if they can get meaning from the text its really important. I dont mind if not all the words are exact.e.g. home for house. The more meaning they get the better.

SO IS YOUR EMPHASIS ON MEANING? OBVIOUSLY YOU ACCEPT MISCUES SO WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON BEGINNING READERS? DO YOU START FROM WORDS OR STORIES? HOW DO YOU GET THEM STARTED?

I do a bit of both with words as well.I find if you use flash cards it takes something away form the story. I'd rather get the story. I found this particularly with Little Red Hen. I found this at the time. Usually I make up a set of flash cards and do both. They rote memorize it. I give them the flash cards too see if they know the words. But I find the individual words take from the book. It doesn't seem to be as interesting as the book if you use the flash cards.

#### WHAT DO YOU FEEL EVALUATION IS IN GENERAL?

Assessing their ability for reports for parents. To show you were to go and what the children need which is hard when you are teaching on a whole class basis. Its hard at present I have three children in my class that are really at kindergarten level and I know what they need but it is still hard with reading to give them the activity that is at kindergarten level to bring them up. I've been giving them things at home to help.

#### HOW DO YOU SEE THE HOME INFLUENCE?

Very important. You can tell the children that get the attention. When you send something home you can see the influence whether its a good reaction. I think its very very important.

#### WHAT PLACE DOES PHONICS HAVE IN YOUR ROOM?

The children should have a good basic grounding in kindergarten particularly initial sounds. If they do they will not have much trouble with reading. We throw it in, like in our cycles. In the Little Red Hen we did "en" but that was revision for 60% of the children. They knew it anyway, not through being drilled in phonics. They picked it up anyway. I threw it in anyway.

#### HOW DO YOU ACTUALLY EVALUATE READING IN YOUR CLASSROOM?

The first year I was here I did Rigby so that was easy. it was how many words they knew and how for they were in the books. That was easy. Last year when we swapped over (to a literature based program) I used to take notes on their reading but not very often. I did it this week because I knew you were coming. They read me anything from the library they know they can handle. They choose their own book. Whether its one we have read as a .... Some chose Little Red Hen. There's lots of books we've got up there at pretty well their level. So they go off and choose a book and read it to me and I write a comment. I give them an A. B. or a C. like the reports. I give a grade. A. is above average. B. is at grade level and C. is working on a modified program. So I give them a grade only on how they read that book. If I gave a C. because the book was too hard I would comment on that. I comment on their listening on the mat (see Sheet) I write down the level of the book, for example, level 1 is a first class book.

#### WHEN YOU LISTEN TO THE CHILDREN READ WHAT DO YOU COMMENT ON?

I comment if they are reading it off by heart from what we've read. If they do that I go back and ask them to tell me some words so I know if they have memorized it or are actually reading it. I look for fluency and if they look to the teacher for help or will attack words by themselves. Also how loud or soft they read. Some children inclined to whisper. Whether they enjoyed it or not. Whether they are confident.

WHAT VALUE DO YOU SEE IN ORAL READING IN YOUR CLASSROOM EXCEPT FOR ASSESSMENT?

I don't do... I don't get them to sit down and rattle off a book. I find oral reading tells me what they reading and whether they are choosing a book at their level. Whether they know they are choosing a book at their level. I remember at school when we would all sit down and read they school magazine. Its really an evaluatory thing, oral reading.

NOW THEIR U.S.S.R.?

I make a comment on their silent reading. I look to see if they choose an appropriate book, If they are reading it. If it is factual or fiction. If they have bought a book from home. We have a sharing time after U.S.S.R. If they enjoy it. I see what they enjoy reading or just talk about the pictures. Some dont want to share.

WHEN YOU LOOK AT APPROPRIATENESS WITH U.S.S.R. HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT IS APPROPRIATE?

Whether they can actually read it.

HOW CAN YOU ASSESS THAT DURING U.S.S.R.

Its a bit of a guess. I can sort of see. They read with their mouths open. I questioned these ones (on the sheet) about the book they had read that morning, what it was about and could you share it with a friend.

SO YOU ARE ACTUALLY LOOKING TO SEE IF THEY ARE INTERACTING WITH THE TEXT DURING SILENT READING OR JUST LOOKING AT THE PICTURES.

yes they flip through or the one that looks into space or the one that brings in the same book for ten weeks.

HOW DO YOU FIND THIS (SHEET) AS AN EVALUATION TOOL?

I find it good, really good. As you see we are making up this one at the school (indicating school check list.) we're working on that. I would personally prefer this one (own sheet)

WHY?

I feel I can write here whereas a number doesn't mean anything. A tick doesn't mean anything. I did this last year and I found that I guessed. These are usable comments (own sheet) over and above the school sheet. If I dont know I have to get the child out to read to me and I have to talk to them. By report time I have three or four of these. Having done this the school one will be a breeze.

WHEN THE CHILD DOES READ ORALLY TO YOU DO YOU DO ANYTHING TO SEE IF THEY HAVE UNDERSTOOD THE STORY?

Not really.

DO YOU FEEL YOU COULD OR SHOULD?

Yes they should be able to tell me back what actually happened. The content of the story.

SO YOU DON'T GET THEM TO TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT THE STORY AT THIS STAGE OF THE GAME.

I do when I ask them about their story in silent reading time to know whether they have actually read it or got their information from the pictures. I haven't done that for their oral reading.

SO DO YOU ACTUALLY GET THEM TO RETELL AT THIS POINT?

I ask them to tell me what happened in it.

DO YOU ASK THEM SOME QUESTIONS OR DO YOU ASK THEM TO TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED? HOW BROAD OR NARROW ARE YOUR QUESTIONS?

Narrow. I just say "what happened"

WHAT WOULD YOU EXPECT TO BE A GOOD RESPONSE?

The ones I know are the good readers I would expect they would be able to tell me. Those at picture stage I would be pleased if they could tell me what's in it.

SO YOU FEEL THAT THOSE WHO ARE AT PICTURE STAGE WOULD NOT BE COMPREHENDING EVEN THOUGH IT IS A PICTURE STORY?

No. they still can. They can tell me what it's about but they don't have the depth. If it's a funny story they don't catch the humour.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE EVALUATION SHEETS AT THE END OF THE YEAR?

Last years got thrown out. I keep them during the year and use them for reports and parent interviews. The school sheet is not passed on.

WOULD YOU HAVE LIKED TO HAVE THE ONES FROM KINDERGARTEN?

They'd be useful. We get reading ages.

HOW ARE THEY ASSESSED?

I'm not sure what test they use. I think it was a standardised test. I find it useful.

DO YOU FIND THEM ACCURATE?

No they're not accurate. I have two children who didn't score and they are much better than some who did. I find it useful straight away to form reading groups. I use ability groups as per reading age. I had to change some but it helped to get started. It told me about that child whether they were able to read or were struggling.

DO YOU THINK THE TEACHER COULD HAVE GIVEN YOU A RANKED LIST THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN JUST AS USEFUL?

Yes.

DO YOU HAVE GRADED CLASSES?

No we have parallel classes

SO YOU FOUND THE READING AGES USEFUL AT THE BEGINNING. THAT WAS THE ONLY INFORMATION YOU RECEIVED?

m..m..m

WHAT SORT OF INFORMATION DO YOU FEEL WOULD HAVE BEEN HELPFUL FROM THE PREVIOUS CLASS?

A short note on each child to help group them. Possibly the reading age. I find it handy. But you learn pretty quickly.

ARE THERE ANY IDEAS OR INFORMATION ABOUT EVALUATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO USE?

I'd like to know if I'm doing the right thing. I'd like to know the way I evaluate is suitable. I know it works for me and it works when I have to talk to parents because I know exactly what they can read. I know I don't like check lists.

THE PARENTS ARE QUITE SATISFIED ABOUT THE TYPE OF REPORTING YOU ARE DOING?

They seemed quite all right.

WHEN YOU ARE DOING THIS SORT OF SHEET WITH THE CHILDREN HOW DO THEY FEEL ABOUT ORAL READING WHEN THEY ARE NOT USED TO IT?

O.K. They enjoy it because after they read to me they can read to any teacher if they want to. Some are a bit scared. They stand a fair way away from me but I get them to come closer.

ANYTHING YOU FEEL ABOUT READING EVALUATION YOU'D LIKE TO TELL ME?

Its very hard. A lot of observing.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU OBSERVE? DO YOU WRITE DOWN COMMENTS?

No I just store the comments and that influences my comments when I do this sheet.

SO THIS SHEET'S COMMENT ARE NOT JUST TAKEN ON THE IMMEDIATE RESULTS BUT ON AN ACCUMULATION OF IDEAS?

Yes.

WHEN YOU ARE OBSERVING WHAT SORT OF THINGS DO YOU LOOK FOR?

Whether they are copying.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Whether they are completing it by actually reading it or looking to see what the other one has done. Some activities you can do without reading. Whether they are going back say in zig-saws to see if they can read it.

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WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE COMPONENT PARTS OF A LANGUAGE PROGRAM?

Reading, writing, listening, speaking and drama.....

JUST LOOKING AT READING AND THE BEST READER IN YOUR CLASS AND TELL MY WHY?

My best reader's a good reader because she has a marvellous home background. She has obviously read or has been read to since she was a baby. Lots of home attention a middle class type of family.

APART FROM THE HOME BACKGROUND WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE CLASSROOM THAT TELLS YOU SHE IS A GOOD READER?

She reads..she reads anything....she reads all the instructions, any messages on the board she reads it...Any books I hand out she reads...If I hold up a book she reads the author before I can.

GOOD ...NOW I WANT YOU TO THINK OF YOUR BEST WRITER AND TELL ME HOW YOU CAME TO THAT CONCLUSION.

Ah well the best writer is not my best reader. My best writer just sits and writes and doesn't come for words just writes his own words and they are all close to what they should be. They are amusing stories. He likes to read his stories to others ...he likes to make his friends laugh so he likes to write funny stories. I've got two top writers. One is also the top reader but this one stands out as a better writer because the other one doesn't like mistakes.

WHAT ABOUT SPELLING...WHO WOULD BE A GOOD SPELLER AND WHY?

My good spellers are my good readers and they are not necessarily good spellers because they sound words out or invent spelling. Its because they know basic words like 'home' and 'dad' and 'mum'....they memorize those sight words into spelling words...good spellers are not always those that invent words in their writing either.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Well Julie Ann the good reader and the good speller and the good everything. She's the one that wont invent. There's another good speller and good reader and he wont invent either he rather sees the whole word he memorizes it ..he wants to see it right..I write it on a piece of paper for him and in a few weeks he knows the word.

WHAT ABOUT THE CHILD WHO DOES INVENT CONTINUALLY?

He's a rotten speller. He's a dreadful speller...absolutely rotten because he spells the way he says it . He isn't thinking about the way it looks he just invents the whole time which is fine for writing and I presume it will come that he will start to get the whole in his mind and know what it is ...like 'was' 'w' 'o' 'z' all the time but he's had 'was' in his spelling list for about 10 weeks because he keeps getting it wrong and its still 'w' 'o' 'z' he's just inventing it the way he says it but he's still an above average speller.

WHAT ABOUT THE SAFE SPELLER WHO ONLY WRITES THE WORDS HE KNOWS AND THEREFORE GETS THEM RIGHT AS AGAINST THE CHILD WHO WRITES ANYTHING AND HAS A GO AT IT ...HOW DO YOU SEE THAT?

Ah I've got a lot of those ...they only write words around the room and then turn it into a story. They're what I call poor spellers because they are not using any word attack skills at all. The best I've got out of a child like that is the initial sound.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY WORD ATTACK SKILLS?

Lots of basic words like mud, dad and things like that that are so easy to break up and write. I had one today come for 'me' when 'me' just sounds like 'me'



DO YOU HAVE GROUPS IN YOUR CLASSROOM...ABILITY GROUPS...THAT RIGHT I REMEMBER NOW YOU START OFF WITH THE INFORMATION YOU GET FROM THE KINDERGARTEN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR?

Yes I based that on reading ages then I found that the reading ages weren't.....they may be able to read those sight words but I would rather it based on ability because they can do the activities. They can move around their groups...some can work independently. Its still ability groups...like I've got one boy who at the beginning of the year had a reading age of 5.6 which was right up the top of my class but he's in the bottom group because he can't work independently he can't concentrate, can't read instructions on his paper and doesn't listen so he's down with the very bottom readers but he's a top reader.... so I juggle them around as to how they work in a group.

SO IN SAY THE GROUP THAT CHILDS IN IS ALL THE CHILDREN IN THAT GROUP OF THE SAME GROUP WORK ABILITY?

Yes group work ability not the same intelligence...but how they work in that group ..how they do the task.

IF YOU HAD A NEW CHILD IN YOUR CLASS HOW WOULD YOU DECIDE WHICH GROUP THEY WOULD GO IN?

I've just got one...Well as soon as he walked in I knew he was above average.

WHY?

The look of him...he was confident..spoke out loud and politely ...he calls out a lot so he's confident ...so I said to myself he'll be in middle group so then I got out the Rigby Readers and got him to read those level ones ..he skimmed straight through those so I put him into the second top group..I left him there a week the work he was giving me ...the reading and the writing was above average so I put him up in the top group. Its trial and error for a while.

SO HE IS ABLE TO WORK IN GROUPS AS WELL AS BEING OF HIGH ABILITY?

Yes he's in the group that doesn't need me at all.

YOU WERE SAYING THAT THE LITTLE BOY WHO CAN'T WORK WELL IN GROUPS READS WELL. IS ALL THE WORK FOR ALL THE GROUPS THE SAME?

Yes the material is the same but each group has to read a required standard and do certain sections.... I only expect the bottom groups to do on section I rule it off and that's all I expect them to do..I grade it as it goes down the page. I make it really easy at the top and harder as it goes down or if I don't grade it I expect a different quality from the bottom and the top group.

WHAT SORT OF WORK DO YOU GIVE THEM?

Well at the top they have easy words on the sheet and they have to match them up, then in the next section they have to get the words from somewhere else and then down the bottom I've got joining words to pictures...they are all the same like emu platypus etc so they can use their initial sound to get the word ....then I put another one down the bottom for example echidna, emu where the initial sound is the same so they need to use more of the word. It gets harder usually they do it. They are so much slower in working so I don't expect them to get through it all.

IF YOU HAD A CHILD WHO WAS HAVING PROBLEMS IN LANGUAGE AND YOU WANTED THE PARENTS TO HELP ....YOU FEE THEN CAN DO WITH A BIT OF EXTRA HELP FROM HOME. WHAT SORT OF THINGS WOULD YOU ASK PARENTS TO DO?

Well I asked one parent of this little girls who is really weak in spelling, she doesn't have much up top but she's a sweet little thing so I asked the parent to read to the child every night and to get her books that are low in ability for example...this is a cat...this is a dog...repetitive things and you read it to her until she can read it back to you - she may have memorized it but at least she'll get confidence. She did that for a while...the mother bought a book that actually had the words in the back. The child could read the book so the next step was to read the individual words and she's learnt a few of these words now. Then I suggested commercial activity books like Let's Spell...Let's Write....So she went and bought one of those...it was a cut and paste one and she got a sound one so she's working on that now. Anything that will require the parents to sit with the child for twenty minutes or so.

HOW DO YOU FIND SOUND WORK BOOKS AND SPELLING WORK BOOKS? HOW DO THEY FIT IN WITH PROCESS WRITING?

They don't really but the ones who are poor readers don't know their initial sounds so that kind of things can only help not hurt because if they have an initial sound for a word they are further along the track than a blank page.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE SCHOOL POLICY AS FAR AS LANGUAGE IS CONCERNED?

I really wouldn't have a clue. The school is very much into reading and writing and the literature based idea. But the evaluation of it has to be ..... I don't know....I really don't know.

THAT'S ALRIGHT. NOW YOU'VE BEEN WORKING ON THESE EVALUATION SHEET. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THOSE SHEETS?

No they've developed. I've found them quite good particularly when it comes to sitting down and writing reports. In my evaluation folder I've got check lists on words they know and what books they've read to me, hoe they're going in oral reading and how they're listening and

what they're reading in silent reading. That will be a good bringing together. It will bring all the little pieces together. I'll just sit down for half an hour and tick off each thing.

SO YOU'VE GOT QUITE A FEW CHECK LISTS YOURSELF THAT YOU KEEP?

I keep getting all these brain waves and think oh! that would be a good idea as I run off these things and start them and try to keep them running.

DO YOU EVER FIND YOU'VE GOT TOO MANY?

Yes...Well I'm now keeping a record of what Rigby books they're reading to me. I'm also keeping a record of what books of their own choice they read to me.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK AT WHEN YOU EVALUATE SPEAKING?

How they talk to other children ....how they speak to me....whether they are confident, whether they're clear. Really it's an observation thing...You know the mumblers and you know the one who won't talk to anyone.

DO YOU CONSIDER THAT ANYONE WHO IS QUIET COULD BE A GOOD SPEAKER?

Ah Yes if they got over their shyness but not in all cases because I've got two or three. One's pretty well O.A. and he doesn't speak to anyone unless he gets pretty fired up and then he'll speak but you can't really understand it..it's pretty mumbly and very quiet. There's another one that talks like a two year old.

WHAT ABOUT THEIR LISTENING? WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR WHEN YOU EVALUATE THEIR LISTENING?

Whether they're listening to the instruction. As I was saying to Trevor this morning...You always tell the listener when you sit there for 15 minutes and told them what to do and explained and talked about it and they go away and still don't know what you've said. You can tell the listener then or when we read the serial every day I'll go back after it and ask what happened today or before we start they chapter the next day I'll ask what happened yesterday and you get all these dead pan faces sitting there...they might know about it for ten minutes and then it's gone.

ON YOU REPORT YOU HAVE A. B. & C.. HOW DO YOU DECIDE IF A CHILD'S AN A. OR A B?

Well my expectation I suppose. What I expect of them at that time as being class average....Like the top readers I'd instantly give them an A and then the next group that's like above average...that'd be the toss and turn between A & B and I'd probably decide on the way they do work in groups.

AND SO DO YOU COMPARE THAT B AS CLASS AVERAGE WITH ANY OTHER FIRST CLASS GROUP?

No its just my estimate. I've never had a first class before so I wouldn't know what was class average.

INTERVIEW. 2.4.87 GARY 4TH GRADE

I KNOW YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH TREVOR ON EVALUATION. WHAT INSTIGATED THIS?

I have found that evaluation of the children's progress had been the void in my education since I started the Reading/Language Diploma. I have not felt comfortable since I started to teach whole language, about evaluation. I tried to find a method. I've had hours with Trevor and we've tried heaps of different methods. Trying to find out how we do our language, not just reading but whole language evaluation.

This latest one is one I came up with early in the piece. Because of my inspection I wanted to have something I was working on.

I have implemented this across the grade I'm supervising in week 6. From that I had a meeting with my grade and pulled apart what we thought was unnecessary - duplication. Things that were hard to assess on. We did a second draft on it and took it to the staff with the idea of devising a K-6 document.

WHAT SOUND OF THINGS DID THEY FEEL WERE HARD TO ASSESS?

Yes areas we had broken up into minute detail. Things like: "skills and strategies in reading", "predicts unknown words using semantic, syntactic and grapho phonic cues" They found that ..... We looked at enjoyment skills and strategies and across curriculum.

In the enjoyment area there was not too much hassle there. There were things like reads as a free time activity. They were very much observations. They found it hard to gather the information on things like predicting unknown words. Also predicting outcomes at a whole text level or at a text level. You could make a judgement at a whole class level during shared book. That the class was good at it.. Some children would stand out. On a time basis could you justify the time spent on this particular issue on the check list.

LOOKING AT PREDICTION HOW DID YOU EXPECT THEY WOULD GO ABOUT FINDING OUT THAT?

Apart from observation at a whole class level we gathered information by an oral reading, retelling with a short passage.

WAS THAT AN ORAL RETELLING?

The kid came and read a short passage one on one with the teacher. The teacher shut the book and asked them questions on an individual basis about what they thought the book was about. Stopping then at a certain part in the text and asking them what they think would come next. things like that. it could only be done in an individual basis really a conference interaction.

RIGHT SO YOU GIVE THEM AN ORAL PASSAGE. YOU MENTION RETELLING

I got off prediction when I said that. the whole idea was that we follow a few strategies through and at the end of the passage we asked them for a retelling to make judgments on this (individual evaluation sheet) "demands that reading makes sense"

WITH YOUR RETELLING DID YOU JUST SAY "TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED". HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT YOUR RETELLING?

Tell me anything you can remember about what you've just read.

DID THEY KNOW BEFORE HAND THAT THEY WERE GOING TO HAVE TO RETELL?

Yes I did in my group anyway. I'm not sure if the others did.

DO YOU FEEL RETELLING IS A VALUABLE SITUATION?

Yes, definitely. I virtually based my whole comprehension assessment on it.

HOW DID YOU RECORD THEIR EVALUATION?

I made judgement whether the child demands that reading makes sense. I also use it for cloze.

GETTING BACK TO RETELLING. WHAT DO YOU ACTUALLY WRITE DOWN? HOW DO YOU RECORD ASSESSMENT.

I simply made a judgement on a 1 to 5 rating whether the child capably retold or had not demanded any meaning.

NOW YOU DO CLOZE. HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU DO CLOZE/

I do it infrequently on an individual basis. I use it for assessment individually. I use it really as a cooperative activity. Within my group I write a cloze on the book we are doing. They get together, usually a group of 3 or 4 mixed ability. They have to come back with a combined piece. I use individual a lot less frequently than cooperative.

SO WOULD YOU USE IT INDIVIDUALLY OVER THE YEAR WITH EVERY CHILD OR ONLY WITH THOSE HAVING DIFFICULTY.

Individually they would all get a chance to do a cloze mainly as an assessment activity. I have a group of children who it would be a waste of time to do a cloze individually as they couldnt read the text anyway. They are better working with two competent readers and to see how they do it.

WHAT SORT OF ASSESSMENT DO YOU MAKE ON AN INDIVIDUAL CLOZE. HOW AND

WHAT DO YOU RECORD FROM THIS CLOZE?

Is the child looking at the entire text...about making an entire text make sense or are they fragmenting text by failing to forward reference or backward reference. Whether the word makes sense within the language around the gap but at a whole text level it doesn't. The retelling again I mark 1 to 5. I mark the cloze on their own stories particularly the weaker children.

YOU WERE SAYING THAT YOU WRITE DOWN WHETHER THEY ARE MAKING SENSE AT A WHOLE TEXT LEVEL OR WHETHER THEY ARE FRAGMENTING IT. WHERE DO YOU WRITE THOSE THINGS DOWN?

I write it in my evaluation folder. I've got the check list and pieces of paper.

SO YOU'VE GOT THAT CHECK LIST THERE IN THEIR FOLDERS. DOES EACH CHILD HAVE AN INDIVIDUAL FOLDER?

No just an individual section within a folder.

SO YOU'VE GOT JUST ONE EVALUATION FOLDER THAT'S GOT EVERYTHING IN IT . DOES IT HAVE ONE OF THESE (CHECK LIST) SO FOR EACH CHILD?

Actually we've had to change it as I had one for each term and now we have on for all four terms. You now get a spread. You can see what is happening over a range of time.

Those kiddies who don't handle cloze I have reading a standard reading format that I set for them in the way of following tapes, being read to, reading with the teacher, looking at the whole story and getting to know that it has to make sense. I don't train them in cloze.

GETTING BACK TO THE FOLDER...YOU'VE GOT THESE CHECK LISTS IN IT?

Yes ....reading, writing, listening, speaking....whole language.

YOU WERE SAYING YOU HAVE BLANK PAPER TO WRITE ANECDOTAL RECORDS ON?

Yes I scribble as I mark with the kids and write it up later ..those things that are of major concern.

ITS OBVIOUS FROM THIS TYPE OF EVALUATION (SCHOOL SHEET) THAT YOU ARE EXPECTING THAT THE TEACHERS WILL DO OTHER EVALUATION IN THEIR CLASSROOM.

I see this (sheet) as the judgments that are made after all the data had been collected.

SO AS A SUPERVISOR, SOMEWHERE IN THEIR FOLDERS OR IN THEIR PROGRAM YOU

WOULD EXPECT TO SEE INFORMATION LEADING TO DECISIONS THEY MAKE ABOUT THIS (SHEET)

Programs should contain statements of assessment like judgments made on oral retelling twice a term or cloze mark kept. The judgments at the end should not be a whole lot of marks.

WHY DO YOU FEEL WE NEED TO EVALUATE READING?

Reading evaluation had changed heaps at least it has for me. I can talk about any child in my class and their reading behaviour and their reading requirements after five weeks of term 1 without assessment. After looking at the specific problems for some time you can see the traits of the children and can make judgments without formal assessment. Records do need to be kept for future accountability for parents, for the teachers next year or for a relieving teacher. Records are mainly for others.

DOES YOUR EVALUATION HAVE AN EFFECT ON YOUR PROGRAM?

Yes. Individually yes. I still follow the same program but I have individual components for individual children.

DOES THAT CHANGE IN LINE WITH WHAT YOU FOUND OUT IN EVALUATION OR NOT?

Yes I have a remedial system set up but that has had to change in line with what I've found out about one child.

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE THAT ONE PROGRAM WAS UNSUITABLE AND ANOTHER WAS SUITABLE?

This child couldn't handle the process of the first program. He couldn't retell so I went back to his own writing.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THESE EVALUATIONS AT THE END OF THE YEAR. DO YOU SEND IT ON TO THE NEXT CLASS?

Yes they are available for the person to make use of next year.

SO YOU DON'T SEND THEM ON YOU JUST SAY LOOK ITS HERE IF YOU WANT IT?

Yes.

DO THEY USE IT?

I don't think so. They don't use the record cards. I don't think they do use it ...no.... I think its intrinsic. Teachers like to make up their own mind and then when they come to the point of making a decision then they clarify it with the previous teacher. I myself avoid record cards so I don't get preconceived ideas about were someone is.

SO THE VALUE OF RECORDS GOING ON TO THE NEXT IS DUBIOUS?



Yes very dubious I avoid pressuring children by giving tests if I know what they can or can't do.

WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN AT THE OTHER END ...HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE BRIGHTER CHILDREN?

I have individualized reading program consisting of 100 cards of activities for extension work. They record these completed activities on their own sheets.

HOW DO PARENTS SEE THIS SORT OF REPORT SYSTEM?

Our report system here because of the way we are teaching is basically anecdotal. We have a few checklist points.... a very broad judgement. 1 - above average. 2 - at grade level and 3 - working on a modified program. The reports are handed out at the interview. We explain to the parents any thing they don't understand.

RIGHT SO YOU HAND THE REPORTS OUT AT THE INTERVIEW. DO YOU FEEL THEY PLACE A LOT OF EMPHASIS ON THE 1,2, AND 3 OR ARE THEY PREPARED TO ACCEPT YOUR COMMENTS ON THE ANECDOTAL RECORDS?

I think they place a lot of emphasis on the 2 part of it.. There is no trouble with children on 3 as their parents realize they on a modified program and those on 1 are happy. The middle range said that 2 didn't tell me much. But we pointed out that we were telling them a lot in the written comments. They would always look at the numbers.

SO PARENTS ARE STILL PROBABLY COMFORTABLE WITH NUMBERS?

Yes I think so.

HAVE YOU SEEN ANY METHODS OF EVALUATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO MODEL YOUR EVALUATION ON?

No I've been hunting for something for two years since I changed my method of teaching. When I showed this (evaluation sheet) to Trevor at first glance he thought it was good. After closer scrutiny we found there was complications. Hopefully by the time we are finished we'll feel comfortable with it. Also we'll have something that is worthwhile doing not just tokenism.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT PEOPLE JUST TICKING THINGS?

I feel that there area judgments here that are just a tick and a guess. Things like "enjoys writing" is the teacher's ideas of a perception whether the child does or not. There are things there that the teacher can't make a tick judgement without collecting the information first. The checklist is simply a way of making the teacher sit down and reflect on a particular child.. It channel them into the reflective process.

HOW CAN YOU GUARANTEE THAT EVERYONE WILL THINK AS YOU DO?

You can't ...on a supervisory role you have to discuss with the teachers who preconceptions are considered. It depends on the supervisor and whole staff awareness. You could even have a general statement on how to collect data.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT STANDARDISED TESTS?

Perhaps they are useful if you have streamed classes and need to put children in rank order. I'm still very hazy about evaluation. I'm not sure what's perfect. Even when this come out (sheet) I'm not sure I won't want to change it.

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THESE SHEETS YOU'VE BEEN WORKING ON ....WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THEM?

We've had meetings and cut them back drastically. There was a lot of things there I had in there ..... I understood them  
They were from my understanding and Trevor wanted something K-6 for new teachers so that they could understand it relatively easily and be able to work with it whereas mine was for me on year four rather than a staff in K-6 so they were drastically chopped around and cut back. When I spoke to you last time we had just evaluated them at grade level. They were very time consuming. They need to be cut back.

SO HOW HAVE YOU FELT ABOUT THE CUTBACKS?

Ummm I found that the biggest problem was working on a K-6 basis wording things..... People had trouble in answering questions within the bounds if where children are expected to be along the continuum. They couldn't see that in a lot of those...particularly check points that by answering this question 1-5 on my year one children and where they are through the process. They were worried about it. They were quite concerned about the actual wording of a lot of things...we had to throw in a N/A ....not applicable .....to get a few comments in that staff needed that they could see was not applicable to Year 1 but it would be to Year 6.. There are a few things in it that aren't true K-6 statements that every grade can mark... not many though.

WHAT SORT OF THINGS DO YOU MEAN?

Use of resources was one....dictionaries and being efficient at making own spelling corrections. Those sort of things are more self reliant on the older children that wasn't on the younger children. We had trouble with those sort of check list comments. Writing them so that a first grade teacher can use the same comment as a 6th grade teacher. There were a couple we found we couldn't ..... spelling was one.

I FOUND IN LOOKING AT THE WRITING EVALUATION SHEET THERE SEEMS TO BE A

HEAVY EMPHASIS ON SPELLING NOT A LOT ON THE QUALITATIVE VALUES?

Have you looked at the final draft or the first one I gave you?

NO JUST A BRIEF LOOK AT THE ONE TREVOR GAVE ME THIS MORNING. NOW THIS WRITING ONE.....ENJOYS WRITING..... CHOOSES WRITING IN FREE TIME.....SPENDS WRITING TIME PRODUCTIVELY .....FOLLOW THE WRITING PROCESS?

That ones been telescoped...it was broken up into drafting...-editing...self editing ..publishing etc. 5 various things. People felt uncomfortable with making a judgement on the five separate components of the process so that they felt more comfortable with just they can or can't follow the routines to an extent so even the kiddie who drafts and publishes but doesn't edit it something like that you can make a comment on that.

I NOTICE YOU'VE GOT FOUR ON SPELLING?

MMMMmmmm There was a lot of discussion on that. We had ....there was a lot of discussion between the K-1 end and the 5-6 end if the staff on what they wanted. The difference between experiments with spelling and can identify errors in their own writing, that was as spelling conventions...we had some term ...the term conventions in there . They felt uncomfortable with the wording plus that the fact they could identify them didn't mean that they were able to correct them and thats when we went into the one 'uses spelling references efficiently' so the references in our term s now are teachers, dictionaries, wall charts around the room, word banks that are on charts on the wall. The staff were quite happy to use references to....whether a kiddie will write a piece on a theme and all the words are on display somewhere and he totally ignores them. They were quite happy with the one words for all possible references.

HOW DO YOU MAKE A JUDGEMENT ABOUT 'SHOWS COMPETENCE IN SPELLING'?

Competence...that comes down to they experiment with spelling....the kid will have a go rather than come and ask all the time. Identify spelling errors...so they might say I've written "contemporary" but I don't think its right so they underline it or question it. 'Can look it up' this is mainly the good speller bad speller....the teacher judgement on this ...kid is a good speller or a bad speller...or has natural spelling ability.

HOW DO YOU MAKE THE JUDGEMENT IF THE CHILD IS A SAFE SPELLER OR A

You could go through these processes and mark(referring to evaluation sheet) ....to a great extent, to a great extent, to a great extent and is a poor speller. So the kid could an independent editor, recognises he has problems, checks and uses a dictionary and that the published piece must be word perfect or as close as possible isn't necessarily a good speller if you gave them 50 words from the dolche list and they got them all wrong. The judgement...I could make this judgement on the kids in my class pretty easily by looking at their draft book.

I WONDER WHAT THE POINT IS OF KNOWING COMPETENCY IN SPELLING WHEN YOU KNOW ALL THESE OTHER THINGS?

Yes..well...the discussion that came about was that where does the teacher show that they know who is the good spellers in the class and who aren't. We came away from testing to straight judgement. I know there are kids in my class who.....I've got two kids whose publishing work comes out perfect. I've got one kid who when I conference her I don't have to change any spelling. One of the other kids its every third word that's underlined.

WHAT COMES UP IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CHILD WHO EXPERIMENTS WITH SPELLING.....YOU COULD HAVE SOMEONE WHO IS QUITE A SAFE SPELLER ONLY USING THREE LETTER WORDS AND WOULD THEN COME UP WITH HARDLY ANY ERRORS...BUT YOU'VE GOT SOMEONE WHO EXPERIMENTS ALL THE TIME...USES ENORMOUS WORDS AND QUITE INTERESTING WORDS AND IS PREPARED TO DO THAT AND THEREFORE COMES UP WITH MORE ERRORS. HOW DO YOU NOTE THE DIFFERENCE HERE?

That's a good question... The teachers wanted a place where they could state that they recognise the natural ability in spelling rather than someone who finishes with a good piece after going through all the process of editing and publishing just the kid who can spell.

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE VALUE OF KNOWING THAT IS?

I think the value there is for .....that's almost 'talented child' in inverted commas, and the value there is for extension...if you can recognise that these kiddies are getting to a published piece with the language that they are capable of .....If the spelling their first draft is correct then there is room for extension for those natural ability spellers...They all finish up with a good product.....there's room to extend them.

THERE REALLY ISN'T A LOT IN THERE ABOUT THE QUALITY OF A PIECE....ARE YOU DOING ONLY WORK AS A GRADE SUPERVISOR TO LEAD INTO THIS?

No...but in class...I have but I haven't looked at it on a grade basis...In my class I certainly do. Those kids who.....see the comment we're talking about there is that comment there ...After their writing we are looking at to what extent does the piece of writing have value or its literary worth. There is nothing there really. Its very easy in class. The other day I had a conference with Jade Clark. When you have a look at her work it comes down its O.K. you hardly have to touch it. Then we go through and look at leads and change things like 'gots' and 'wents' and vocabulary extension and that sort of thing to make it a more worthwhile literary piece. So the actual awareness comes at level in the classroom....there's's not an evaluation judgement made on that sheet. That's I suppose...its easily made... I think I could tell you now where each kid stood on a scale of 1-5.

ASA SUPERVISOR CAN YOU INSURE THAT YOUR TEACHERS ARE LOOKING AT THOSE

PARTICULAR THINGS?

No I can't.

SOME OF THESE ARE PROCESSES BUT A LOT OF THEM ARE PRODUCT. IF THIS WAS GIVEN TO ME FILLED IN I DON'T KNOW THAT I WOULD REALLY KNOW WHERE THE CHILD WAS AT AS FAR AS THEIR WRITING WAS CONCERNED. I'D KNOW WHAT SKILLS THEY'D ACHIEVED.....

WHY DID YOU MAKE THE DECISION ABOUT EVALUATING IN TERMS 2 & 4.

Basically these were to serve reports. We still evaluate on a weekly, termly, what ever basis. Also it was seen that the processes weren't quick enough to make great quality judgements over ten weeks. where the kiddie is along the process in week two term one to week two term two is not liable to be great. If they enjoy reading in term one it is more than likely they will for the whole year. There was only a few of the actual points that you can assess the kids on ...a term was to narrow a span of time for much to happen.

WHO WOULD YOU SAY IS THE BEST WRITER IN YOUR CLASS?

Ummm Jade Clark.

HOW DO YOU MAKE THAT DECISION?

Actually there's two and they are both from different decisions. Jade Clark and David Harker. Jade writes often. She writes with enjoyment. Her original drafts show structure and good conventions and good levels of spelling understanding where she marks out words that may need to be checked. Her work on the convention side is very strong with a lot of work to do on extension of her vocabulary and leads and actually the imagination is there but it often finishes very quickly. She write mostly narratives and not much other things so there's a problem there. David Harker .....you've got to squeeze the work out of him and its usually poorly punctuated...with direct speech that isn't used very often but his writing is extremely unique....you read it and laugh and there's a lot of eccentricities in it ...I can't match him with any other kid I've ever taught. Yet he'd only have about 6 pieces for the year. He certainly has the best potential for writing interesting stuff.

HOW WOULD YOU DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THOSE TWO CHILDREN ON THIS SHEET?

Your point is taken there. I would say on this sheet when you handed it to someone David wouldn't be recognised for having the talent that he has.. He would be seen as ordinary and Jade would be seen as the leading beacon. The strengths David has are not on this sheet.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **SCHOOL POLICIES**

POLICY STATEMENT:

LITERATURE-BASED READING

LURNEA PRIMARY SCHOOL 1986

Principal, T. Somerville

Committee Chairperson, Ms D. Tonkin

Rationale

Each child at Lurnea Primary School should benefit in some respect from a Literature Studies program. Such benefits could be:

- a) Through a study of literature children are exposed to a variety of experiences, not all necessarily familiar to the reader. By dealing with these experiences, children develop a broader "world view".
- b) Stories that are introduced are true narratives and provide excellent models for writing.
- c) If teachers are selective in prescribing particular books for children, they are able to instil into these children a desire to read further.
- d) Quality literature, as well as encouraging children to read further, stimulates children's imaginations and may assist in the creation of plots and characters in their own writing.
- e) The majority of adults who read nowadays do so for relaxation. A literature studies program would encourage children to read for that purpose, and attempt to demonstrate to them that reading is a pleasurable and worthwhile leisure activity.

The place of books in the lives of children attending the school.

In the great majority of cases the home environment is not conducive to the development of good reading habits. Most parents occupy unskilled and semi-skilled positions with almost no one holding professional responsibilities. While being able to read, parents tend to avoid reading and rely more on passive forms of entertainment, (T.V. and video). Quite naturally the children show similar patterns, and surveys reveal that local libraries are under used by both children and adults. The school still remains as the major place where a positive encouragement is given to reading.

The staff is committed to providing the necessary literary experiences because there is a firmly held belief that literature can:

- a) provide a resource which is rarely found at home.
- b) play a part in providing for a well-rounded development of school pupils.
- c) promote the reading of more fiction material.
- d) feed children's imaginations, helping them to come to grips with the huge amount of data and experiences encountered by children in the daily lives.
- e) assist in building concepts and patterns which interact to form a basis for decision making and understanding of life in general.

The role of children's literature in developing children as readers.

Traditionally, the teaching of reading has been attempted in



## 2.

piecemeal fashion, mainly through the phonics and the whole word approaches. Once children were able to master exercises relating to these methods they proceeded to comprehension passages, cloze work and similar tasks.

Research has shown that these methods are not the most successful in the teaching of reading and that through the study of whole texts children gain more in their ability to read for meaning.

Many advantages, therefore, arise as a result of using children's literature as opposed to reading "schemes" in developing children as readers.

Firstly, literature implies whole good quality texts; real stories which hold the children's interest. The language encountered is not controlled and stilted, making predicting simpler. Children are able to test their predictions and have them confirmed or rejected as they proceed with their reading. They are also able to concentrate on the context of the story, rather than its mechanics.

By reading selectively to children, teachers can instil in them the desire to read and help them develop a love and taste for reading. Teachers can also channel children into a 'right' kind of reading behaviour by using real books. i.e. children's literature.

It can be seen therefore, that children's literature can play a vital role in developing children as readers.

### AIMS

As has been noted at various stages, a literature Studies Program can:

- provide a source of enjoyment for pupils.
- build a foundation for future reading development.
- cultivate a real love for the beauty of language.
- impart to children a love of reading.
- guide children in their choices of literature and introduce them to great works.
- help bridge the gap between basic reading skills and maturity of reading.
- introduce children to a wide range of traditional and modern quality literature.
- create a desire to consider reading an enjoyable pastime.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES.

It is anticipated that a literature studies program will lead children to be able to:

- raise questions which probe the content of what is read. i.e. stories and poems.
- relate ideas found on the printed page to life around them.
- reflect on ideas which are at variance with their preconceptions of things or individuals.
- appreciate values, modes of behaviour and points of view arising in cultures other than that to which they are accustomed.

- respond sensitively to situations and characters brought to life by an author or poet.
- test the relevance of what is read to their own personal experiences.
- strengthen their language skills and broaden their vocabulary development.

#### CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF BOOKS FOR THE CLASSROOM.

Any book selected by a teacher for use in the classroom should fulfil the following criteria:

Interest - the book must arouse and cultivate interest in the reader. Enjoyment ought to be gained from the reading of the book. This must be the primary consideration.

Readability - a child's enjoyment of a book will be limited by his experiences and understandings; therefore books must at least be within the grasp of the readers for whom they are intended.

Variety - a wide variety of literature, including poetry, gives the less able readers the opportunity to read shorter texts. Examples are picture books, traditional and folk tales and poetry anthologies.

While the above points have been defined separately, they are nevertheless related and will consequently allow a teacher to bring an infinite number of suitable books into the classroom for study and enjoyment.

There are some books that should be avoided either because they provide poor literary models, e.g. Enid Blyton stories (stereotyping, no concepts of space or time) or because they reflect sexist or cultural biases.

#### SECTION 2

##### a) The Links Between Literature and Writing

As has been mentioned in Part One, children's literature provides an excellent model in developing the children's writing. This applies particularly to the narrative genre which generally follows a set pattern: Setting, Complication, Resolution and Conclusion. Most narrative stories read to the children are based on this format. Naturally, some longer novels will have more than one complication and resolution, but will follow the format all the same.

Many teachers, while using the conference approach to writing in their classrooms, fail to recognise the various genres presented in books generally and allow children to constantly produce the "recount" genre of writing. If the children are read to and themselves read many examples of literature, this cannot help but influence their writing. They will want to produce wonderful stories like the ones they are constantly hearing and reading. As pupils develop as writers, teachers can make them aware of what constitutes the narrative genre, and the pupils are able to take it upon themselves to consciously develop this genre. In the main, however, it appears that narrative writing is caught, rather than taught.

While the emphasis in this paper is on fiction, the same principle can be held true for the writing of expository text, which also has a set format.

b) The Classroom Reading Environment.

Of major importance in the success of any program is the environment in which it is implemented. This is particularly important in reading where fear of failure will cause a pupil much anxiety and make "reading" an undesirable activity. Through literature, a teacher is able to instil into his/her pupils a love of and a taste for reading. With the teacher as a model, children are able to see others enjoy reading and will find pleasure in it themselves.

The classroom teacher must organise his/her room so that children can escape from the main teaching/learning area and curl up with a book. Suitable arrangement of cupboards etc. can successfully close off an area from the rest of the room. This area should feel comfortable and be "decorated" with examples of children's work such as stories, poems and artwork. As various language themes are covered in class, so can the "decorations" change, so that this reading area always remains appealing.

Resources made available to the children should be many and varied. They should be displayed so as to attract the children. In this way, many children who are reluctant readers may choose books because of their covers, but at least this is a start. These children often prefer to read non-fiction material; therefore it is the teacher's responsibility to make these available also. When the teacher feels it is appropriate, fiction books, recommended personally by the teacher to a particular pupil, will begin to comprise a larger proportion of that pupil's reading material.

Timetabling

Carefully planned and implemented, a literature-based program provides many language activities for children. However, the classroom teacher must allow the pupils sufficient time in the school day for contact with quality literature. Research has shown that reading to the children assists in their reading development and time for this should be set aside each day. Other areas of the reading program considered to require daily time schedules are:

- a) Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading, where the children have the opportunity to delve into a book and complete it independently, should they so desire.
  - b) Sharing and presentation times e.g. book reviews; role plays of scenes in books, and
  - c) Instructional reading, where the teacher works with groups. This would include discussion of passages, checking understanding of texts and the development of higher comprehension skills through selective questioning.
- N.B. It should be noted that whilst the teacher works with one group, other groups of pupils would be involved in literature-based activities e.g. poetry reading, reading in theme areas, listening post, book creation (of our writing) and book reviews.

SECTION 3. Practical Suggestions for the Classroom Teachers.

(N.B. Activities marked "T" indicate teacher direction, "I" indicates independent work).

1. The Reading Aloud Program.

In oral reading, the reader is required to give a word-by-word oral rendition of the printed word; the reader is required to recode the print to sound. Silent reading however, does not ask this of the reader and so the two are considered completely separate activities. A silent reader is able to use her/his skills of predicting and confirming. She/He can extract meaning from a text by processing a minimum number of words. Oral reading speeds are generally considered to be insufficient for meaning-making. Oral reading activities can be justified as a worthwhile reading activity on only a limited number of occasions. It is necessary that the text to be read aloud has been read and understood by a pupil. If a teacher reads often to the children they will learn that reading aloud is for the enjoyment of the listeners. Therefore, activities where children are required to read aloud should also be enjoyable. Such activities might include:

- a) The reading of a text by its writer to the class.
- b) The reading of selected poetry after silent reading and practice in reading aloud.
- c) The teacher or pupils selecting prose passages to be read to the class either as a prelude to discussion or for its language value alone.
- d) Presentation of drama etc. in small groups or with a whole class.

Naturally other activities can be added but the significance lies in the fact that all of the above demonstrate a presentation of some kind and require preparation.

2. Ways of Sharing and Working with Books.

Cultivating children's interest in books is the first step in the sharing of literature. Activities designed to do this are:

- a) Reading from Big Books so that younger children can really see language come to life. (T)
- b) Creating class stories from textless books.  
e.g. Moonlight by Jan Ormerod.  
The Train by Witold Generowicz.  
Up and Up by Shirley Hughes.  
These can then be made into class Big Books. (T)
- c) Selecting specific books for reluctant readers. Tell them why they would enjoy it and conference with the child individually to gauge his/her reactions. Picture story books are particularly suited for these children. Selections depend upon pupils' tastes. (T)
- d) Exploring the artwork of picture and picture story books. How do these pictures add to the story?  
Examples:  
J. Wagner: John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat.  
M. Sendak: Where the Wild Things Are, In the Night Kitchen  
P. Pavey: One Dragon's Dream  
P. Allen: Mr. Archimedes' Bath  
E. Carle: The Very Hungry Caterpillar.  
P. Hutchins: Rosie's Walk  
W. Mayne: The Mouse and the Egg

6.

- e) Choosing a short story that can be read to the whole class to stimulate discussion. The book selected should present a theme to which all members of the class can relate. This discussion can then lead to a writing activity.

e.g. Theme

Title

Loneliness John Brown, Rose & the Midnight Cat.

Being Needed

The Riverboat CrewDreams Where the Wild Things Are

### 3. Independent Reading Catering For a Variety of Tastes.

One aim of every teacher is to have all the pupils in his/her class desire to read independently at their own level. Therefore it is necessary that the class teacher adopt a positive attitude to literature at the outset. Some strategies which can be employed are discussed below.

- a) A timetabled activity in which each learner and the teacher participates every day is Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading. The benefits of this activity can be found listed in many teacher references, but to be successful the class teacher must see that an abundance of high-interest reading material is always on hand.
- b) If the teacher presents extracts from books every day, interest is sure to be engendered in the pupils. A variety of presentations is necessary to sustain children's enthusiasm in fiction (including poetry). These examples may be selected by children in their free or U.S.S.R. reading periods.
- c) It is also desirable that children be allowed sufficient time to read non-fiction books. This is necessary so that children become well acquainted with the characteristics of expository text. In primary grades especially, children will be required to use the expository genre in their writing and must have many examples upon which to model their attempts.
- d) Regular conferencing with children about the books they are reading helps to sustain their interest in literature. An aware teacher may find occasion to re-direct some children's reading.

### Encouraging and Extending Children's Responses to Books.

Responses to books can be classified into two main sections. The first most obvious is the reflecting and talking done after most stories: the second is interpreting creatively particular aspects of stories. The activities noted below are according to the type of response.

1. a) Completion of a cloze-type summary of the story to show whether a pupil has understood a book. When children become accustomed and more expert at this they can begin to write their own summaries. (I/T)
- b) Discussion of a story in small groups or as a whole class. Children can offer opinions on plot. If in small groups, a list of prepared questions can be distributed to the

group leader. A few examples are:

1. Does the book tell a good story?
2. What is the climax?
3. Is there a logical sequence of happenings?
4. Is the conclusion believable?

Groups can join and discuss answers to these discussions. (I/T)

- c) Discussion of characters. Children can tell what they liked or disliked about one or more of the characters. For children who have had experience in this kind of activity, more complex questions could be asked:

- e.g. 1) What are the character's strengths?  
2) Does he or she have any weaknesses? (T)

- d) Children can imagine themselves as a particular character and tell what they would have done in a critical situation. (T)
- e) Argue that heroes do not always "live happily ever after". This can be done comparing the characters in fairy tales to more modern literature. (T)

2.

- a) Pupils could rewrite the story simply for a younger audience (I)
- b) Conversations or other incidents can be dramatised (I/T)
- c) Children can review a particular book and place within a folder for whole class viewing. This may aid other children in selecting their books. (I)
- d) A story may stimulate some pupils into writing poems about incidents encountered (I)
- e) Some sections of stories are suitable for re-writing as short plays. (I/T)
- f) Humorous stories can be made into a cartoon strip. (I)
- g) Children can design alternate dust jackets for books that lack impact. (I)
- h) Pupils can devise various means by which to promote books they have enjoyed. This can be done with individuals, in pairs or small groups. (I)

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LURNEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

SPELLING POLICY

March, 1986

T. Somerville



SPELLING  
Teaching / Assessment / Evaluation

The following notes indicate a standardised approach to the teaching and testing of spelling. It is a position that you will be moving towards as you gain confidence in newer approaches. You are not expected to make instant changes to what may already be sound teaching practices. These notes should be read in conjunction with the school spelling policy. In particular you should be guided by the major underlying principle of our policy that is spelling only exists to serve writing.

The following principles should apply throughout the whole school.

1. A large proportion of spelling teaching will be done during the editing stage of writing.
2. Spelling books should contain only words that are spelled correctly. This edict has two implications:
  - a) children's transcription of words from board to book needs to be carefully checked;
  - b) exercises and tests should be done on testing sheets or work books.
3. Children should not be expected to learn words that they can already spell. This means that "theme" words, "interest" words "survival" words etc. all should be pre-tested.
4. Some children may have no words in any one week, i.e. they correctly spelled all words in the pretest and were error free in their daily writing. (This would be an extremely rare occurrence and may be a pointer to a need for more factual writing.)
5. While spelling is essentially a written exercise much profitable work can be done during spelling discussion activities. However, oral drilling of list words is an unsound practice.
6. Dictation passages should be largely unnecessary. Daily writing provides all the 'dictation' practice that children should need. Editing passages is a good substitute exercise.



Bad Spellers of the World Untie

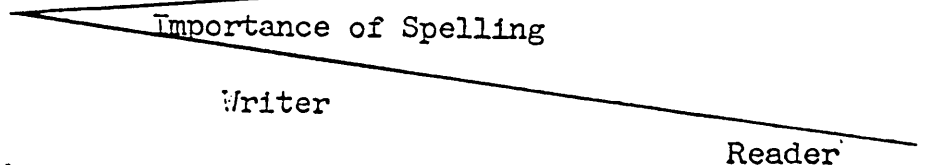
While there is as yet no final spelling syllabus the following principles should influence the way in which spelling is taught at Lurnea in 1985.

. Basic Function:

The basic functions of spelling are to help fulfil the need of the writer to express and communicate and to help fulfil the need of the reader to learn what the writer means.

. In relation to the Writing Process the importance of Spelling should be seen as increasing as it moves towards the reader e.g.

Experience/Prewriting/Drafting/Editing/Rewriting/Publishing/Response



. Early or over-emphasis on Spelling can impede the process of both learning to spell and learning to write.

. Spelling serves writing and has little meaning when isolated from the context of written language.

. Word lists and dictation passages can shift the focus of spelling from the students' individual needs and the context of written language.

. In Spelling, children are at different levels and progress at different rates. Below is one example (from many) of a researcher's view of the developmental nature of spelling.

Gentry has found the following stages.

Stage 1:

The deviant stage.

At this stage children write deviant spellings like btBpA for monster.

"The deviant speller may guide the teaching activities needed to extend the child's understanding of the writing system."

Stage 2:

The prephonetic stage.

"Here the child renders one, two, or three-letter spellings that demonstrate letter-sound correspondence. MSR for monster and KLZ for closed omit sound features which the child hears; the letters used represent but a few of the salient letter-sound correspondences."

This stage shows that the child is beginning to link letter to sound, "an important stride toward written language competency."

Stage 3:

The phonetic stage.

This stage is "characterized by an almost perfect match between letters and sounds." This is the stage at which children typically match the sounds they wish to represent by using the names of letters. Gentry provides an example of spelling at this stage.

ADE LAFWTS KRAMD NTU LAVATR

(Eighty elephants crammed into a elevator.)

"These spellings allow the child the first real opportunity to communicate in writing."

The transitional stage.  
 "As phonetic writers become better acquainted with standard orthography, their representation becomes more abstract. They advance to a transitional stage between phonetic and correct spelling." 158  
 Examples of spelling at this stage may be:  
 EGUL for eagle (at the phonetic stage the spelling would probably have been EGL):  
 YOUNITED for united; and  
 HIGHCKED for hiked.

Stage 5:

The correct stage.  
 At this stage the child has come to grips with spelling as a special written system which represents meaning without relying on a direct representation of sound as written symbol.

villafie desacate fairo plagie tramel sematere  
 innokyoulate leagie sewes pellvillyen

The only valid measure of a child's spelling achievement is found in his correct use of spelling conventions in his writing.

### Some Classroom Issues.

1. Commercially produced spelling texts and kits do not, in the main, serve the needs of individual pupils. It is recommended that they are examined most critically before being used.
  2. Class Lists - Should in most cases be PERSONAL i.e. made up of those words from daily writing that are causing difficulties. Main criteria are 'use' and 'need'.
  3. Theme words - new words that are needed for the current unit or theme.
  4. Difficult words - Some justification for teaching those words that are often misspelt or confused by most children. A need for caution here as these words can often become out-of-context lists. (100 provided if requested).
  5. Testing  
 Traditional Dictation serves little or no purpose. Daily writing provides the obvious passage on which to judge spelling. It is recommended that a passage containing errors be given to pupils in order that they can develop editing and proofreading skills.
- Lists Can be tested by peers or parents. Class testing for personal words would be impossible.

Procedure - Teaching should follow the most successful technique:  
 LOOK  
 COVER  
 WRITE  
 CHECK

### Finally

There is no one correct way to teach spelling. Make use of a variety of techniques. Probably the best text produced so far is "Spelling: a teachers guide", by Colin Hudson. Some examples from this book are appended.

LURNEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

WRITING POLICY

W R I T I N G -     A Policy Statement -     T. Somerville,  
Principal

Preamble

Approaches to the teaching of writing have undergone significant changes in recent years. The emphasis has shifted from a product orientation to one where the writing process assumes as much importance as the final product.

As well, we have come to a different position in answering the most fundamental question to do with writing and that is: why write? Whereas in the past, the answer may well have been expressed in terms of expanding creativity, developing vocabulary etc, we now realise that while these aims remain peripheral desires, the basic objective is that through writing, children can come to grips with what is being learned; through writing they develop their understanding of new fields of learning.

Implications for Classroom Practice.

Two major implications flow from the above consideration of writing:

a) If writing is a process, then teachers and pupils ought to know what the writing process is.

b) If writing is a means of learning then teachers must make clear to students the purpose for the writing that we ask them to undertake. From these implications the following aims derive:

Aims

1. To foster interest in writing as a tool for learning.

2. To develop an understanding of the writing process.

More specifically the following objectives derive:

1) Children will write daily.

2) Children will demonstrate their writing skills by expressing themselves in the following genre: Observation/Comment  
Recount  
Report  
Narrative  
Exposition

3) Teachers will plan their programs so that the above genre will be experienced. (appropriate to age levels)

4) Children will publish those texts which have reached a standard of excellence appropriate to their level of writing development (1 in every 4?)

5) Rooms will be so organised as to create an atmosphere which will encourage and foster a desire to write.

Steps in the Writing Process.

1. Stimulus / Pre-writing.

Can take the form of discussions, pictures, talks, research, excursions, T.V., themes, etc.

When children write what they know and care about it should follow that they write more readily and with greater ease.

2. Draft

In this step the main ideas are pinned down, the general shape of the writing is determined. This is essentially a quick process during which the conventions of neatness, grammar and spelling are not focussed upon. Draft writing is concerned with content - polishing and publishing will (may?) come later.

Writing Policy Statement (continued)3. Self-Editing

Having made a draft copy some attention can now be given to conventions. Amendments can be made: additions, deletions, spelling corrections are all likely during self-editing.

Of course, the very young child may not be capable much in the way of self-editing. In other words, be very aware of the child's stage of development.

Some self-editing questions -  
 Have I said what I mean to say?  
 Does it follow a sequence?  
 Have I checked spelling, punctuation, etc.  
 Have I said it in the best way?

4. Re-Writing

Some re-drafting may take place following editing. Other writing may be proof-read and edited, but not re-written.

In the early stages of writing/language development; scribing for publication may be done by teacher or other adult.

5) Publication

After careful re-writing and a final proof-reading, the piece is ready for publication. This is a very important motivation to quality writing.

Some suggestions for Publication

1. The work can be typed or handwritten by the teacher, parent-helper, or the child - depending on age and ability of the writer.
2. Conventions should be observed.
3. Writing should be presented in an attractive manner (don't lose sight of the fact that the emphasis should remain on the quality of the writing not the excellence of the artistic presentation).
  - Display on bulletin boards, in classroom, library etc.
  - Publish a class, school magazine
  - Publish in individual books
  - Publish class books on Theses, etc.
  - Tape stories for listening
  - Tape stories to accompany illustrated picture/story books
  - Write onto paintings, craft etc.
  - Write a story each week onto the chalkboard for the class to read
  - Have a writer read the story to the class, assembly, another class, Deputy Principal, Principal.
  - Write onto overhead projector sheets for class use.
  - Make story cards

6. Response.

Remember that the child is writing to mean i.e. he/she is engaging in a form of communication that requires a response to meaning. Such comments as: 'excellent use of sentences', 'accurate spelling and punctuation', 'nice try' are better replaced by responses that reflect on the meaning of the message. For example a piece of writing that dealt with the loss of a pet may generate a comment: "I know how you must feel as I just recently lost my kitten", or "Do you think you might ask mum for another pet?"

The above comments reinforce the idea that writing is for meaning and that writers have real audiences; that writing can be a form of extended dialogue.

Of course, with report and expository writing it may be more appropriate (and particularly with senior writers) to respond more at a critical level.

#### 7. Conferencing.

Not a single discrete stage in the process but rather an activity that occurs at many different times and in many different ways. Conferencing involves teachers, fellow pupils and other adults in a discussion of what is being written. It arises from written activities associated with any subject in the curriculum.

#### Types of Conferences.

1. The Roving Conference in which the teacher walks around the class gaining an overview, getting work started, asking the needed questions, making the appropriate comments.
2. The Group Conference. This is used to introduce a new mode of writing, to teach a point of usage, to share individual children's work.
3. The Whole-class Conference. Here 'published' books are read, editing skills taught and examples of successful writing shared.
4. The Individual Conference in which the teacher helps the writer by asking appropriate questions.
5. The Peer Conference in which another child helps the writer to surface new information and reflect on style.
6. The Publishing Conference. This is where the teacher and the child prepare the story for publication. Focus can now be directed to conventions. Before asking for a publishing conference the child should have:
  - checked information, spelling, punctuation and grammar;
  - read the story aloud and sought some comment from a partner
7. Evaluation.

LURNEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

EVALUATION POLICY

Principal : T. Somerville

DEFINITION

Evaluation is a tool of teaching, the central purpose of which is to discover whether learning is taking place and where it is perhaps being obstructed, and incidentally to suggest directions in which help may be given to the child as a learner.

RATIONALE

The purposes of evaluation are to provide for the collection of evidence which will show the degree to which pupils are progressing toward curriculum goals, and to permit teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum experiences, activities and instructional methods.

The functions of evaluation are to make provisions for guiding the growth of individual pupils, to diagnose their weaknesses and strengths, and to provide a basis for the modification of the curriculum or for the introduction of experiences to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils.

The following process should be followed:

1. The statement of objectives
2. A decision regarding content and learning experiences.
3. The organisation of learning experiences.
4. Measurement

PROGRAM

Types of Evaluation:

(a) Much evaluation will be of a formative nature i.e. evaluation conducted on a continuing basis. In this way data will arise from day-to-day teaching and recording may be informal - in some cases no recording at all will be required.

(b) Summative: At the end of each seven weekly programming period summative evaluation should be carried out.

The recording from such evaluation should be both quantitative (marks, grades) and qualitative (written comments).

TESTING TECHNIQUES

Make use of a whole range of techniques but concentrate on those which suit your particular teaching style.

(a) Observation Techniques

Case studies	Sociograms
Check lists	Scrapbooks and Collections
Anecdotal Records	Flow Charts
Oral Reports	Logs of Events (field Trips)
Work samples	Photographs, films
Rating scales	Peer Group Evaluations

(b) Scored Techniques

Standardised Tests  
 Criterion Reference Tests  
 Teacher-made Tests (objective, multiple choice, true-false etc.)



LURNEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

LITERACY EVALUATION DOCUMENTS

\*Evaluation refers to aspects of enjoyment, skills and strategies and across curriculum usage.

1 = To a great extent

5 = Rarely

N/A = Not applicable

### READING

<u>The Child:</u>	TERM	
	2	4
Shows an interest in books		
Enjoys listening to books		
Selects suitable material during U.S.S.R		
Is engaged with reading throughout entire U.S.S.R session		
Reads at home as a leisure activity		
Can read own writing		
Can predict from cover/title/pictures		
Participates in Shared Reading		
Uses an appropriate balance of cueing devices		
Shows proficiency with cloze reading techniques		
Ability to retell		
Demands that reading makes sense		
Can interpret maps/charts/diagrams		
Uses contents and indexes efficiently		

### WRITING

<u>The Child:</u>		
Enjoys writing		
Chooses to write in free time		
Spends Writing Time Productively		
Follows the routines of the writing process		
Experiments with spelling		
Can identify spelling errors in own writing		
Uses spelling references efficiently		
Shows Competency in Spelling		
Has control over standard dialect		
Can manage the structures of: - Appropriate factual texts		

## TERMS

	2	4
- Appropriate Non-factual Texts		

SPEAKING + LISTENINGThe Child:

Speaks clearly and confidently with partner		
with small group		
with whole class		
with teacher		
Enjoys oral drama activities/ participates willingly		
Can contribute orally to discussion across syllabuses within the curriculum		
Respects speaker/listener rules/routines		
Listens, absorbs meanings and acts upon them		

## APPENDIX 5

### SAMPLES OF MEMBER CHECKING

# Michael Descriptive Report.

→ I don't mind my "Lurnea P.S." nickname → "BEAN."

Michael is new to this school as from the beginning of the year (1987) It is his first permanent appointment. He trained at Macarthur 2 years ago and has since been doing casual work mainly in high schools. He teaches Year 5/6

## Beliefs.

Michael believes that:

- Good writers are not afraid to have a go at spelling big words. Spelling doesn't count in writing. Different genre should also be used in writing. In writing the most important thing is that it makes sense and keeps to the topic. Quality is more important than quantity.
- Writing assessment is terribly judgmental. He looks for improvement in the children's work. (as a criteria for the writing to go on a special clip board) → Best stuff gets displayed + then goes into "published work" folder.
- Some of the children's work is shoddy ie. not copying up work correctly after publishing...not making sense.
- Retelling should be accurate in storyline, characterisation, events and description.
- A good reader reads a variety of books as well as a good number of books. Intonation indicates comprehension.
- Marks are too judgmental.

During early experimental stage with new words →

Up to a point → Overall goal is to eventually become proficient with "correctness" of previously encountered words.

All chn have something displayed

I choose the chn's best stuff (its more positive)

but most of all, understands content

ie can efficiently derive meaning

Its hard to be expressive in reading if you are not understanding text - able to predict well.

Also, Can analyse

- Parents should be encouraged to use the have-a-go technique when helping their children in spelling. *we learn from mistakes its ok to try and fail. The main thing is that we try; to our best ability.*
- Even though he keeps his own records it would have been helpful *ability* to have access to other records at the beginning of the year. He will use any method of evaluation that comes up. Standardised tests may give some help but most decisions are reached by trial and error and discussions with ~~the~~ <sup>other</sup> teachers *(ie/ supervisor)* *Give it a go to see if it is better than my present*
- A good speller must have a good grip on basic spelling and be *approaches* able to correct them themselves. Resources such as a dictionary can be used. Sometimes the words used are not very adventurous. Quality varies, some children write a lot and don't get many mistakes, others write a little and get a lot wrong. Children vary in their capability for learning words. If they have a lot of words and can't learn that many a lesser number is negotiated with the child. These are words that the child feels are important. Basic words such as 'they' and 'this' are important and should have priority on a list.
- A good listener *tends to be* ~~is~~ confident in front of others. *sometimes. Not all listeners wish to publicly express our opinions* Retelling plays an important *in my evaluation of how well the child listens.* ~~part of the listening process.~~
- The school policy encourages the children to read for meaning and have a go at writing and spelling. Spelling is meaning based and the children are encouraged to communicate effectively.
- He would get the parents *brothers/sisters etc* to read to any child experiencing difficulty in language. The child should retell and write with

an older brother or sister to check.

*Can also be gauged by observing whether chn follow instructions (but this is getting into realm of student)*

an older brother or sister to check.

more advanced with 171  
language skills.

- Some of the fifths are better than the sixths.
- Marks on the children's work are threatening and so avoids them.
- The staff meetings on the development of the language evaluation sheets have been helpful.
- He will show his "ignorance" if he speaks up during staff meetings.

Some like  
to know,  
so I tell  
them an  
approximate.

### Practices.

Michael:

- Stores copies of stories in folders. One folder for each child. Only the best stories were placed in the folder. (The others were disposed of) No, - best go in to chris "published" folder. - below usual standard go into chris manilla
- Reads the children's work and marks it when its published. The (story good stories go <sup>into published work folder</sup> on a clip board in the store room and the not so good go in a manilla folder. The purpose of this is so that at the end of the year there will be a collection of good pieces. The published pieces were available for children to read with the authors permission. The criteria used when marking pieces are in accordance with conferencing information. e.g. how efficiently they used the information from previous conferencing or their re-writing. All work is looked at on an individual basis.

↓ + whether they are ~~improving~~ / improving etc.  
constant

- Keeps a lot of numerical records for spelling. Each child is

3

Weekly  
+ end  
of  
term tests.

Also marked  
at pre draft  
draft stage

Also, new topic pre-test marks.

tested sometime during the week on their own list. Cloze and comprehension are given a mark. This is based on the type of questions asked e.g. Literal, inferential, creative or critical. Marks are also given for written retelling. I now also do verbal retelling.

Varies

- Scores cloze out of 10. Comprehension is scored out of 20 and involves questions including question types mentioned above.

- Does not write marks on the children's work. <sup>Do on tests that I file in my store room</sup> ~~Marks are given~~

~~for reading round the room.~~ I observe students' willingness to read to whole group + how well they carry it out.

- Uses school magazine stories for cloze and tries to delete <sup>sometimes</sup> words that encourage prediction. The whole class has the same cloze, middle of the road.

<sup>Have since changed</sup> The actual cloze sheets have a cloze passage on them and some questions but the questions do not refer to the <sup>part of the</sup> passage that was used for cloze although it is obviously the same story. Comprehension passages are taken from a book being read to the class.

I now give 2 "levels" of passages. IE <sup>sometimes</sup> what I consider to be an average. - Yr 5 } standard  
Yr 6 }

- Has reading round the room. He discusses books with the I also do this children to ascertain what they think the book is about. with Spelling.

<sup>Only those who wish to read aloud, do so.</sup> IE/Give a passage with 20 ~~and~~ incorrect words.

- Does U.S.S.R. and sometimes uses this for observation. 1 mark for identifying incorrect word.

- Give reports out at parent interviews. This is done in mid <sup>1 mark for writing</sup> June.

- Takes anecdotal records of types of books the children <sup>correct spelling above it.</sup> are reading and if the children are fully engaged in reading.

→ Giving 2 tests

- Keeps anecdotal records about attitude and was thinking of (IE/ Y5 and Y6) <sup>standard</sup> helps me to better determine

above grade av/  
grade av/ below  
grade av students  
in a split  
S/S situation.

using a 1 - 5 criteria for this.

- Writes anecdotal notes briefly at school and expands them



using a 1 - 5 criteria for this.

- Writes his anecdotal notes briefly at school and expands them (topics at home. due to time factor.

I get some

words by giving a spelling pre-test on new topics from across the curriculum

- Establishes spelling lists through ~~weekly~~ set topics, (first draft) errors are <sup>also</sup> taken from <sup>richs writing</sup> this at conference time and a copy given to the children.

- Keeps the original copy of the individual lists in his program.

The children know they will be tested sometime during the week.

- Uses trial and error as a the basis for finding the number of words a child can manage. No more than 20 words would be given

to any one child. (Unless they request it). Requests vary & some poor spellers request more/come dont. Likewise for good spellers

- Decides the group for new children in the class by talking to

the child and looking at their book work and then tentatively

places them in a group. As time goes by, I evaluate other things as well to better determine placement.

Eg/ Retelling ability/ Cloze/ Comprehension/ writing skills

- Looks at their writing and also how they discuss and share.

- Looks at the children's audience to see their response when he

evaluate speaking. He also looks at the child's willingness to

speak in front of others. The unwilling children are

conferenced. In listening observations are made during story

reading. I try to boost their confidence without being pushy. Pushing a child ~~on~~ to against wishes to ~~be~~ speak to an audience of many could

- Finds the school evaluation sheets really helpful and uses the be ~~be~~ headings for his own evaluation.

devastating if the child's effort crumble. May only serve to strengthen the

Uniformity across school often

helps when in doubt about

a particular student's evaluation.

to speak

child's lack of willingness (by highlighting the reason why she didn't want to)

Use → Above grade av  
Grade av  
Below grade av

## Concerns.

Michael is concerned that:

- About marks and tries to avoid marks for reading. He avoids committing himself to a mark for parents and uses broad terms, e.g. towards the top of the group. (Making progress/needs to... etc)  
↳ Above grade av/grade av/below grade av.
- Parents feel he is not doing his job if there are spelling mistakes.

→ They like all mistakes corrected, even if their child writes a 20 line story containing 40 mistakes.

I prefer to start by correcting basic/commonly used words and then, once mastered, expand.

Correcting heaps of mistakes from a single story ~~is~~ is very negative for the child.

I prefer to identify a problem with a child and, <sup>then</sup> encourage.

(sort of ~~being positive about~~ making a negative event more positive)

disagree - as some say it's not possible  
but if they have had a go at it  
at least you have...

### Beth. Descriptive Report

Beth. is seven years out of Goulburn College. She is teaching year 1 but most of her experience has been in casual work in the Primary area. ↘ 2 years on Y2 previous to Y1

### Beliefs

Beth believes that: Literature based reading scheme is the best method I've used yet!!!!

- Better readers can progress at their own pace when using Rigby reading scheme. It also allows for individual assessment. Rigby tells you how many words each child knows and what book they are up to. <sup>??</sup> Oral reading is basically only for evaluation. <sup>not really.</sup>

It gives you an idea of their level.

- Enjoyment of reading is one of the most important aspects. ✓✓

Getting meaning from text is also really important. Reading does not have to be word perfect so long as the meaning is maintained. Choice of appropriate book is important. An appropriate book is one the child can actually read. Flash cards are not as interesting as stories. ➤ not one at frustration level.

- Evaluation is to assess children's ability for reports to parents and to show children's need. Specific evaluation is difficult due to the wide range within the class.

- Home influence is very important and it shows in the child.

- A good basic grounding in phonics in kindergarten, particularly initial sounds is necessary. A strong phonic base prevents reading problems. Phonic awareness is increased in

disagree - as some can still have problems, but if they have had grounding in phonics at least you have some where to start, on

→ just in a general sense as 176  
don't really drill phonics  
year 1 through the emphasis on specific 'sounds' in the stories. that strongly now a days.

- Signs of reading during U.S.S.R. are that they read with their mouths open and don't just flip through the book or look into space. The teacher question the children sometimes about the books content.

also I have found  
that the chn "pick up" knowledge of sounds etc as they go along.

- Her personal evaluation sheet better than school evaluation sheet as it has written comment on it. A tick is meaningless and involves a lot of guessing. Written comments are usable and require actual contact with the child.

✓ used in conjunction with schools evaluation sheet-

- Good readers can retell the content of the story. Poor readers can retell through the picture but there isn't the depth of understanding. Children enjoy oral reading. Reading evaluation is hard. It involves a lot of observing. Good readers need to have a sound home background and they usually read a lot.

→ love to read to you to show they

- Handing records on to the next teacher would be useful. Reading ages are useful but not accurate. Ranked lists from previous teacher would have been just as useful. A short comment on each child from the previous teacher would be helpful.

can read.

- Good writers are not necessarily good readers. they just write and don't need assistance. a sense of humour is sometimes obvious and a confidence enabling them to read their stories to others. sometimes they show that they don't like mistakes.

- Good spellers are mostly good readers. ✓ They are not necessarily good spellers because they sound out words or invent spelling. It's because they know basic words like 'home' and

'dad' and 'mum'. They memorize those words into spelling words.

Good spellers won't invent, they want it right. A bad speller

invents all the time. They just spell it the way it sounds and

even after weeks of having a word in the spelling lists a bad

speller still gets it wrong. Some children use words around the

room. They are poor spellers because they are not using their

word attack skills. Word attack skills are breaking words up

like 'mud' and 'dad' up into sounds. →

disagree → maybe they just feel secure with the words they know are in the room

- Reading activities are organized in groups based on ability.

Children that can work independently are also grouped together so

sometimes a good reader is with a bottom group because of lack of

independence.

and keep adding to this bank all the time. Mostly as a "whole word approach" - very few of mine break words

- You can tell if a child is intelligent by his looks, he shows up to confidence and speaks out loudly and politely. spell them

- For weak children a home reading program would help using low

ability reading books. e.g. This is a cat. This is a dog.

repetative type text. Continual reading of text is done until

the child can read it back even if memorized. This helps

confidence. After reading the book individual words are looked

at. Texts such as Lets Spell and Lets Write would be suggested.

These texts don't fit with process writing but poor readers do

not know their initial sounds so it can only help. If they know

book is available at

K-Mart or a News

agency as

any home help

is better than

at all.

one child of mine has had stories read to them and has had to write stories for mum as homework and the improvement is very evident.

their initial sounds they are further down the track than a blank page.

- She doesn't have any real knowledge about the school evaluation policy. The evaluation sheets are quite good at report time. *→ only the sheets that were compiled during staff meetings.*
- Shyness can override a good speaker's confidence.
- Good listeners listen to instructions and can retell.
- Expectations make the difference between A, B and C on the report. Top readers instantly get an 'A'. The decider between 'A' and 'B' would probably be the way they work in groups. *also the way they respond to books.*

#### Practices

Beth:

Bases reading activities on a book, e.g. The Little Red Hen, over a fortnightly cycle. This includes songs and poems about the book. They read the book and have ~~four~~ rotating activities over eight days. Some of these activities are sequencing, a yes and no answer stencil and cut and paste activities. These change with each book. There are also four constant activities e.g. listening post and a 'sound' activity. Rigby skill builders are used and sometimes a little book is made to take home to read.

- Gets beginning readers started by *by using stories & activities.* teaching them some words but stories are better. Flash cards are made of the words in the story. *to begin with but not so much now that they are reading*

*\*changed since then<sup>4</sup>.*  
*6 activities on the book + 2 sessions on Rigby*  
*skill builders eg* *- L. Post*  
*- yes/no*  
*- concentration/Bingo*  
*fortnightly cycle.* *- small book*  
*- cut & paste*  
*- Read and draw*

- Sends work home if the child is experiencing difficulty.

- Evaluates the literature based reading program by occasional note taking on the children's reading. Children choose a book to read to the teacher and the teacher comments. A, B or C are given. the grade is given only on that book. C could indicate that the book was too hard. Comments are also made on listening. Note is made of the level of the book. Comments on oral reading are made. If they are reading 'off by heart' word recognition is established through questioning. Fluency is noted and word attack skills and also if they seek help from the teacher. Volume is noted and also their enjoyment and their confidence. Sharing is done after U.S.S.R. but it is not compulsory. No actual comprehension check is done from oral reading. After silent reading the teacher sometimes asks 'what happened?'

- Throws the evaluation sheets out at the end of the year. They are used for reports and parent interviews.

- Arranges the reading groups according to the reading ages given in Kindergarten but some changes are made. Each group has the same work but the expectations are different. A different quality is also expected. The easy part of the reading stencil is word matching', <sup>for example</sup> by the bottom of the stencil they are joining words to pictures with the use of initial sounds.

- Uses check lists on words they know. Records are kept of the

↓ graded sheet  
so that each  
group can

I made a checklist of 75 words from the "Breakthrough" <sup>list</sup> that I thought they should know and did a test on all chn in February and again now at the end of the year. complete it all or parts designed for them.

In 90% of cases chn have doubled their score → so this will also be used as an evaluation procedure on what they have learnt

- Observes speaking to discover confidence, how they talk to other children, how they speak to the teacher, mumblers and those who don't talk.
- Stores observations which in turn influence written comments. Observations are made of whether the child is copying, whether they are going back and re reading.

### Concerns

Beth is concerned that:

- As she has never taught a Year 1 before she says she doesn't know what average <sup>is and so finds awarding</sup> ~~is in it~~ ~~grading~~ A's, B's and C's very difficult. → as it is all up to you to decide and what you might think is an A → another teacher may say is a B+
- She may not be doing the right thing in evaluation. Is the way she is doing it suitable?
- Checklists don't tell you very much about the individual child.
- concerned that the poor readers <sup>sorry for the bad printing</sup> may not be getting through enough work → or being helped enough.
- also concerned whether my evaluation techniques are suitable

← Evaluating Language is really the teacher giving an opinion on a child and maybe this opinion is different to another point of view

- also personality comes into / or may interfere into grading / evaluating.



I don't think it is as easy to evaluate the Language areas as it is to evaluate say  $\rightarrow$  Number because there is no right or wrong in Language as in Number. It is difficult, however if the teacher finds a way that suits her and works well on a class it is worth keeping and using (in conjunction with school procedures), again.

I feel that I have done a good job of evaluating my class this year as I know through observation, checklists, comments etc, exactly where each child is in Reading and what they can and can't do.

Possibly next year I would simplify my checklists down and comment on the children each term instead of weekly or fortnightly as you can still see the progression that way.

Good Luck!

# Jenny. Descriptive Report

Jenny is teaching a year 3 of 26 children.

## Beliefs.

Jenny believes that:

- Evaluation helps you to see where the children are going and if ~~land~~ <sup>and</sup> how they are coping with the work. ~~and you need to adjust your program.~~ <sup>accordingly.</sup> It shows you any difficulties you might have to work on. <sup>includes</sup> Evaluation is done by observing if children working, their ability to complete the work ~~the children are working co-operatively in a group.~~

- <sup>whole</sup> Not applicable - school now have the same evaluation sheet. On her own evaluation sheet pronunciation could be taken out also expression and be replaced by competent reader.

- Good readers read for enjoyment and read self selected books. Meaning is important. Reading has to make sense, ~~and this is made~~ <sup>way to establish this</sup> A lot of reading tests don't really find out about reading for meaning. They are usually word tests which tests the children's knowledge of words and they don't tell you if they <sup>are</sup> ~~what are the words.~~ Good readers can accurately and quickly <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ complete reading activities and show a good understanding of the <sup>for</sup> ~~the~~ activity and show independence in reading of books. <sup>meaning</sup>

- There is <sup>a whole</sup> ~~no~~ school reading evaluation ~~which~~ <sup>It includes</sup> ~~both the~~ check list sheet. ~~The main thing will be~~ keenness to read quietly, interest in books, use of a dictionary... it ties in with reading through literature. ~~It would be good to have a~~ <sup>single</sup> ~~single~~ evaluation sheet to do over a short period of time <sup>It helps</sup> ~~when completing~~ <sup>when completing</sup> ~~with reports.~~ Not too involved. The school policy is getting down to things that are simple and basic not abstract.

- Evaluation information helps with reading program. It helps you to adjust your thinking and give activities that are meaningful. The evaluation sheets should be handed onto the next teacher.

~~number of personal comments but a checklist could be made~~  
 It would be handy at the beginning of each year to know how the children were coping the year before and any difficulties they encountered. The checklist to consult and then a discussion with the child's previous teacher would save a lot of time in finding out this out

- Ability groups cater more for children needs. Brighter children can have more difficult work. Easier but interesting work for the slower children.

read to their children and listen to them  
 - It is important that parents are reading and listening to their children's needs and that parents read themselves to show the children that everyone reads. Children need to see that everyone reads for enjoyment including teachers and parents. It's important that they see people reading for a variety of reasons - leisure, write interesting pieces

- Good writers use conventions and make stories interesting, to find out information etc. so they can see it as a valuable activity. writing  
 write in different mode i.e. factual as well as narrative, with very little adjustment to be made at publishing stage. They can just say in their reflection their involvement with books. Some children are able to write very interesting pieces but need some assistance with conventions.

1. Good spellers can identify incorrect spelling in their writing and others  
 3. Good spellers can use resources to find correct spelling. They  
 2. They are able to invent words and then don't just use safe vocabulary. are confident about the use of words and are independent.

- Good listeners can follow directions and the conventions of listening. doesn't interrupt and responds to others.

- Good speakers are confident, enjoy speaking and speak in acceptable language when speaking to others.

When a child is reading and they don't

- ~~If a child does not~~ know a word they should guess instead of stopping. ~~A good reader anticipates what is coming up and will choose a word that makes sense. They must get the word to make sense. They can also use the pictures.~~ If they are unable to get meaning from what they have read, then the word that they chose was probably inappropriate.

- ~~Individual spelling lists are better as they are words the children need whereas set lists may involve words the children already knew.~~ With set lists, the children often received words that they already knew. There are a basic set of words that all children will require for writing. Simple words are sounding out words. Children also need to know important words such as 'the' and 'where'. 'we' 'then' etc.

\* Individual spelling lists help to cater to the childrens needs in writing - factual & narrative. They are getting a list of words that they are using instead of an isolated list.

## Practices.

Jenny

- Gives choral reading in order to listen to the children read individually. also cloze passages, comprehension exercises and verbal discussion about the story are given. Observations are made about the children's ability to read quietly on their own without interruptions. choice of books and their ability to follow written directions. This is recorded on an evaluation sheet and helps in reports and interviews. ~~It is also used for~~ Retelling is used for comprehension. Mental notes are taken of retelling. Anecdotal records are also kept.

- Does sharing after <sup>reading groups and sometimes after</sup> U.S.S.R. ~~This time a list of interesting~~ Children can show each other the activities they have completed during reading time. After U.S.S.R the children can share any interesting books or information they read.

## Plays

are used as a reading exercise for good readers.

- Programs reading through literature, good literature not stereotype book. Activities are done for the whole class on class book but at different levels. Some do commercials or plays or cloze. Some listen to tape and follow the books.

~~When appropriate words in cloze have individual teacher assistance.~~

Other activities include making a simplified version of the book for the slow group, comic strips, newspaper reports, activity cards related to the book etc. <sup>as well</sup>

- Keeps anecdotal records ~~on own evaluation sheet, not just a tick.~~ Evaluation for each child in each area is kept in the class evaluation folder.

## reading

- Grades the <sup>reading</sup> groups. They are social at the beginning of the year until <sup>I see how the children are working. I make these observations</sup> ~~the year is used to working in groups~~. Groups are not rigid, they can be changed. <sup>from watching them work and the work they hand in.</sup>

- Puts new children in the middle groups where they are observed and then put up or down according to observation at completion of activity, oral reading, making sense of cloze, discussion, socialization and confidence.

- Takes the children's spelling lists from their writing. The number of words depends on how many words the <sup>children have wrong</sup> ~~teacher writes down~~ <sup>in their</sup> ~~from the children's~~ writing. <sup>This includes narrative and factual writing</sup> If they are having trouble with simple words they only get a few words. <sup>Each child has an</sup> Individualized spelling lists ~~maxed~~ <sup>The children will have up to 10 words.</sup> The children may have a max. of 10 words.

- Looks through the children's draft book every week to see improvement. ~~Each child's book is used.~~ Children's writing

drafts are used for evaluation. These are collected every term and comments are written about them.

Dary is Executive Teacher, Primary School, ...

### Concerns

Jenny is concerned that:

- Her evaluation sheet is too time consuming. could be condensed. More time is needed for evaluation for each child so they can talk about what they are reading. There is not enough time spent with bright children. Too much time has to be spent with the slow children.
- There is no time at the beginning of the year to look at the children's folders.

Formal evaluation takes up a lot of time but it's something that has to be done because we're accountable to parents, <sup>The</sup> department and the community. ~~But~~ Personally I find that a lot of my evaluation is made through observations and is happening all the time as I am teaching

## Gary. Descriptive Report

Gary is Executive Teacher, Primary and teaches a 4th grade. He obtained his second list in 1987.

### Beliefs.

Gary believes that:

evidence of →

*I believe I know where they are. How to document it???*

- There is a lack of evaluation of children's progress, particularly in language and he's not comfortable about evaluation since he began to teach whole language. The school evaluation sheet can be used to record the judgements that are made after all the data has been collected. Evaluation of the children should be continual. He knows each child well enough to be able to discuss their progress after the first five weeks without any formal assessment.

- Records need to be kept for accountability to parents and teachers. Records are mainly for others.

- Some of the items on his own evaluation sheet were difficult to assess. These were: skills and strategies in reading and predicts unknown words using semantic, syntactic and grapho- phonic cues. Establishing new checklists must be worthwhile and not just tokenism. Some evaluation judgements can be made by a tick and a guess. e.g. enjoys writing. This is purely based on the teacher's perception but some items need the teacher to collect data. The checklist is simply a way of making the teacher sit down and reflect on a particular child. It channels them into a reflective process.



*YES. I feel the written documentation after this becomes superfluous.*

→ *Changes ... classes so no need for standardized tests* 1.88

- Standardized tests are useful for streamed classes or for ranking children.

- The supervisor has to discuss the teacher's pre-conceptions and develop staff awareness in order to co-ordinate their thinking about the evaluation process.

- There were problems with working on a K-6 basis for language evaluation. Teachers had trouble answering questions in the bounds of where the children are expected to be along a continuum. Some points on the evaluation sheets were not felt to be strictly K-6. e.g. resources...dictionary use, making own spelling corrections. These, it was thought, were for older children. Teachers felt uncomfortable about making a judgement on five separate components of the process of writing. They felt more comfortable with items like 'can or cannot follow the routines.

- Peer interaction during co-operative cloze is more beneficial than individual cloze exercises. YES

- Children like to read and work with their own writing. YES

- Programs should contain statements of assessment like judgements made about oral retelling twice a term or a cloze mark kept. The judgement at the end should not be the summation of a whole lot of marks. Evaluation affects programming on an individual basis. Giving tests pressures children unnecessarily.

→ not for all children



- Evaluation made available to the next teacher is not used. *But*

Record cards are not used. Teachers like to make up their own minds about the children. They may consult the previous teacher *YES* if clarification is needed. Record cards establish pre-conceived ideas.

- Parents place a lot of emphasis on the 'B' level on the report. they are happy if the child is on level 'A' and they know if they are on level 'C'. They always look at the grades even though they know the comments tell them more. Parents are comfortable with grades and numbers.

- Spelling competency is shown by a child who will have a go, identify errors and can look them up. This is not necessarily a good speller' though according to the Dolce list standard. Testing is not an adequate way to look at spelling competency but judgements using the children's work are. There is value in knowing the 'natural' spellers and those who have to work at it. There is always room for extension of the natural spellers

*→ Through further writing.*

- Children's writing should have literary worth. Awareness of worth must be at classroom level. Quality judgements can't be made every 10 weeks...a term is too narrow a time span. Good writers write often and enjoy writing. Original drafts show structure and good conventions and good levels of spelling understanding. Imagination is also desirable. Some children don't write much but have a uniqueness about their writing that is excellent.

*My emphasis here has  
changed. A majority of my writing*

## Practices.

### Gary:

- Tried to find a suitable method of evaluation. Meetings were held with the principal to try and find a satisfactory language evaluation method. Current evaluation checklists were worked on because of Gary's inspection. These lists were implemented across grade four. A grade meeting analysed them and deleted these items that were difficult to assess. A draft of the resulting check lists were taken to the staff with the idea of devising a K-6 document. ) Enjoyment, ) skills and strategies ) across the curriculum were the areas considered. Difficulties were experienced in the area of predicting unknown words and predicting outcomes at text level. Assesses prediction through observation, oral reading and retelling. Oral retelling done on an individual basis, conferencing really, to assess the item on the evaluation sheet that states.. 'demands that reading makes sense. Children were told prior to reading that they would have to retell. A recorded 1 to 5 rating was used for retelling.

→ on an individual basis.

- Had been hunting for a successful model of evaluation since he began teaching whole language. First look at the previous evaluation checklist seemed to be all right but a closer look revealed complications. Staff meeting resulted in drastic cut backs. the Principal wanted it to be K-6. It had to be relatively easy for all teachers and children. As they were they were very time consuming. Changes were also made to the checklist so that they could be operated over four terms with check made in only terms two and four to fit in with the reports. A lot of

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Have spoken further about this. Very judgemental  
on teachers opinions.  
of very little use to future teachers.

discussion on spelling during the staff meeting on writing was due to terminology. Judgements are now made about spelling by looking at the children's draft book. There is no items on the writing checklist that indicates quality. The items do not differentiate between ordinary writers and those with unique talents.

- Gives marks for cloze passages which are developed with a balance of processes being used. Some clozes are made from the children's own stories and some are written using the book being read in the classroom. Children that can't handle cloze have other reading material to work with. e.g. tapes, reading activities etc. *Cloze rarely used other than on a co-operative basis.*

- Keeps record in an evaluation folder divided into section, one for each child. Anecdotal records are scribbled first then written up later. Evaluation information is passed on to the next teacher at the end of the year. The report system is basically anecdotal with a few checklist points... very broad.. Grades are given. Reports are given out at parent interviews.

- Evaluates the brighter children through an individualized reading program as they keep their own records of their progress through the activities. */// YES.*

*As a teaching device for  
very slow kids*

## Concerns.

Gary is concerned that:

- There is no adequate evaluation to equate with whole language.
- He still does not know what is the perfect evaluation or that he won't need to continually need to change it.

- Is very concerned about the value (or motive) of extensive written evaluation.

Tempted to introduce a tape recorder for anecdotal. ie Use checklists as a guide to reflect upon the children's position/progress/problems etc

After data is collected (observation/re telling  
bookmarking/conferencing/discussion etc)  
~~aware~~ <sup>I'm</sup> aware of children's language ability.

The extent of documentation is the concern.

### Dallas. Descriptive Report

Dallas teaches Year 5. She was successfully assessed for her first list in 1986.

#### **Beliefs.**

Dallas believes that:

- Good readers always read a lot and can put together a very good story and read it as if its a novel.
- Giving all the children the same cloze passage is not right but is waiting for something better to come along.
- Comprehension questions should not be asked from cloze passages. *perhaps informally asked eg in a group situation would be O.K.*
- A good writer uses their imagination, uses books read and is creative. Some children don't write so well but their comprehension is good.
- Some good writers have very basic ideas and not much creativity but have more of a sense of language and can put it together in a good flowing story, everything connects well.
- Different children have different attributes in regard to writing. Some can be extremely wordy but it flows and sounds terrific. Some children have a unique way of putting words together. *I guess they all do!*
- When looking at children's writing you should look to see if the piece goes further than a first draft and follows the process steps and to see if the child has taken the trouble to rewrite or

edit.

- There are two types of response to children's writing, written and oral. The written response is usually done in the absence of the author and is a response to the piece of writing, whereas the oral response is usually constructive and developmental, looking at ungrading the quality.
- Good spellers use a wide range of language other than their everyday language in their writing. They are able to spell the words they use but sometimes they only use 'safe' words. Some good spellers have a go, demonstrating the strategies they employ to get the words.
- Proofreading is a difficult strategy for poor readers. Some children can't look critically at their writing. They really haven't got the strategy for identifying errors. - It proves a very frustrating task for some.
- A's, B's and C's on reports are subjective. There are not many A's in the present class, mostly B's. (a lot of C's too if you are comparing children with those from other schools.)
- A lot of time has been spent on organising the school language evaluation program and new modifications for maths is coming.
- Judgements have to be made about how well the children understand what they are doing.
- A lot of evaluation comments don't come from tests. The check-lists used last year were <sup>literally</sup> 'garbage'. Some comments like 'how children use word attack skills' were not adequate. Making judgements twice a term was too often.

- Comments on the new checklist are required twice a year to help with reports.

-Checklists will be suitable because it follows what is trying to be done in the school. The checklists can't be relied on other things like anecdotal records and comments are needed to help validate the list. The checklists are for every child but very little is written on some children.

*There is very little change in these pupils during the year. Either steady all the time or they never seem to improve.*

- Some children can't express themselves well. Evaluation has to be made whether they can say something precisely and say what they mean, whether they volunteer information and have listened to the question.

## Practices.

### Dallas:

- Gives cloze passages as a measure of comprehension. Different levels of questions, e.g. literal, inferential and critical are given. All the children do the same cloze as a term test.

- When preparing a cloze passage fifteen to twenty deletions are picked. These deletions are at different rates and in different areas. A post cloze discussion is carried out. Comprehension questions are asked from these passages.

- Has individualized spelling lists but does not include seldom used words. Children have only words they have wrong on their list but this is reduced if they have a lot wrong in their

writing. Words are not included that are deemed to <sup>be</sup> caused through haste during writing.

- Finds proofreading a sound method of testing spelling. A passage is used with 'x' number of mistakes in it. The children are required to correct the passage. One mark is given for finding each incorrect word and another for each word corrected.  
↳ Poor spellers really get frustrated after a while during this activity

- Has different sorts of groups. Some are groups or pairs for language work and some are self-selected by the children. Sometimes work is done on an individual basis with the teacher such as conferencing and explaining stories.

- Conducts small group work activities.e.g. listening post.

- Does not always base grading on tests alone. The same tests are given across the grade but the results are not integrated.

- Gives formal tests in maths, handwriting, spelling and reading. Tests are given once a year. term

- Gives the children a grade in writing by collecting a draft, making records at conferences and general observations made in the form of anecdotal records.

- Evaluates speaking and listening by observing if the children's contribution fits in with what everyone has been talking about or do they go off and tell something else.

- Evaluates listening by observing were the children's eyes and



nose are pointing, how they are sitting on the floor, if their faces are showing interest and whether what they are listening to is above or beyond them.

#### Concerns.

Dallas is concerned that:

{ Evaluation of chn's work is only good for that year.  
 { New teachers are not interested in previous years results.

Ev. is very time consuming & sometimes I think you could keep everything you need to know about a child in your head & save the writing for report time.

Because of our type of program in reading / language, chn in this school may be disadvantaged if they go to another school. They would find it difficult to adjust to the old system again.

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **PEER DEBRIEFING NOTES**

PEER BEBRIEFING  
EVALUATIONG A SCHOOL'S EVALUATION POLICY  
Helen Woodward

**What She Did:**

Describe policies/practices/processes of the school policy.

Interviewed volunteering teachers K-6 twice. Principal.

Took field notes at staff meeting on school evaluation policy.

Look at classrooms

- physical layout

- re-interviewed teachers about specific issues - to verify or confirm issues brought up on tape

Examination of school artifacts. Children's writing. Teachers' evaluation records. Cloze, comprehension passages. Teachers programs.

**Member Checks:**

Of interviews

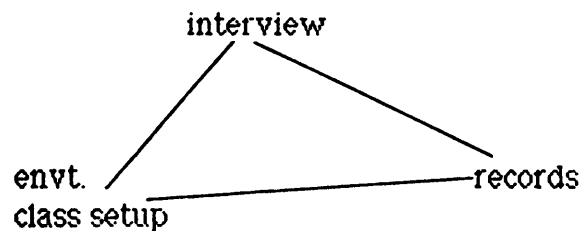
Descriptive accounts (as beliefs and practices)

Descriptive account of teachers' beliefs about language evaluation - language teaching.

**Sources:**

What are the 3p's of language evaluation at the school.

Teacher interviews - beliefs, actions, concerns. Executive interviews - beliefs about teacher beliefsexecutive beliefs, (actions?) who do they think they are evaluating for? Role of counsellor.



**School Setting:** sociopolitical setting of school

as it relates to interviews, school policy statement, their authors, teacher knowledge of source, staff meeting - how valued by who teachers programs, samples of work, evaluation records, observation of physical layout.

**ANSWERS:** (Big e and Little e evaluations)

Language evaluation and beliefs about language we related.

Teachers are confused about the nature of evaluation. Links between teachers and executives may be positive or negative.

## **APPENDIX 7**

### **DESCRIPTIVE AND INFERENTIAL REPORTS**

### Alison: Descriptive Report.

Alison is an exchange teacher from England, on Kindergarten.

#### Beliefs.

Alison believes that:

- In order to retell satisfactorily the child must have some of the following under control: where to begin, how to end and sequence. General discussion is useful also. There is no need for an evaluation that is passed on from one class to the next because as soon as you share a book with a child you know where they are up to.
- A good reader wants to read, to themselves and to the teacher. Their stage of development in story writing is further advanced.
- The parents are congenial. Parents seem quite pleased in the areas of retelling, vocabulary and interest. Parents should read to their children particularly those having trouble and children should retell. Spelling or writing for children having difficulty should not be worried about but parents should do a lot of talking and discussion with their children and give them experiences.
- A good writer is very keen and observes things when the teacher is writing. A child that is good at imaginative writing may not have good actual writing ability ie. letter formation etc.
- Scribing helps with conventions and correct letter formation which is important. Writing can be one or more sentences. Some of the children's ideas are quite extensive, some are showing story line, not many have the idea of ending a story. The longer the story in writing at this stage the better. Storytelling is very important
- It is difficult to assess in the area of speaking and listening. Just because a child speaks up does not mean that their structure is sound. On the other hand some more quietly spoken child may speak very well when asked. Those that are outspoken aren't necessarily well spoken. Listening is tied to personality. One child might be bright but attention seeking and wanting to talk therefore doesn't listen. Second language learners don't get to listen much. Behaviour also counts. The basic criteria is that the children are not talking when they are meant to be listening and are able to follow directions.

#### Practices.

Alison:

- Developed her own evaluation system, that of cards, one for each child. On these cards is recorded the books the child 'reads' to the teacher, the date and any comments on reading. Book language, picture clues, finger pointing and choice of book are things that are noted. Retelling is used quite frequently as an assessment of understanding. Discussion is sometimes used to try to draw out the meaning from the children. Standardised tests are used in the infants department.

- Does a lot of work with pictures and stories as part of the reading process, sometimes directed sometimes free. Children write and relate it to the teacher who scribes it for them. A class book is made for around the room reading. Labelling is also used and a book corner is available. A lot of environmental print is around the room. Phonics are only treated in context. If the children were allowed to take books home this procedure would be followed:

- 1 Child chooses book....one they know either we've done it in class or they've heard it on tape.
2. Children tell the teacher the story.
3. Sometimes A asks if they can 'read' it to her.
4. They take it home and 'read' it to their parents.
5. They bring it back and retell it to the teacher.

- Programs for the children to listen to story tapes, have shared book and do associated activities are included.

- Lets the parents know how the children are progressing. Sometimes sets a topic in writing e.g. about things we hear. She wanted them to use the words 'hear' and 'heard' even though one child wanted to write about an aeroplane. Factual writing has also been introduced and copy writing is also done ie. teacher scribes and the child copies writing, Stories are published.

- Groups fairly freely. She has tried several different groupings but has decided for free form grouping. Most activities are were the children can work at their own levels. Observation plays an important roll in assessment and in placement of children.

- Decides on levels for reports on enthusiasm, the amount of detail given in retelling, print concepts, formation of letters and imagination.

- Gives storytelling at least twice a day.

## Concerns.

Alison is concerned that:

- Children are not allowed (Infants school policy) to take books home until they can read because the parents will say their children can't read.

- Infants department lacks expectations and not much time given to books.

## Inferential report:

Alison feels that Australian schools in general and LPS in particular are backward in their approach to teaching language. The attitude about the take home books bothers her and she finds that difficult to understand. The conservatism of the infants department is disturbing to her. She has a sound understanding of the basic processes in language development and has sound procedures with which she is comfortable. She doesn't seem to be quite letting go as far as writing is concerned. She is concerned with letter formation and apologetic about the quality of the hand writing and the fact that most children are not writing actual letters yet. She places quite good store by discussion with individual children. She feels retelling is of great value and that individualized work is to be sort after.

Constant contact with parents helps to overcome difficulties and would help if take home books were allowed.

Alison values the children's work and displays their work. She has sound concepts about the children's speaking and listening ability. The children are well immersed in language both oral and written. Her theory of learning is based on 'natural' learning' and 'whole language'. Actual program is minimal. Alison is diligent and is encouraging and fresh to speak with but she feels fairly isolated in that her ideas are contrary to most of those held by the others in the infants department.

## Beth. Descriptive Report

Beth is seven years out of Goulburn College. she is teaching year 1 but most of her experience has been in casual work in the Primary area.

### Beliefs

Beth believes that:

- Better readers can progress at their own pace when using Rigby reading scheme. It also allows for individual assessment. Rigby tells you how many words each child knows and what book they are up to. Oral reading is basically only for evaluation.
- Enjoyment of reading is one of the most important aspects. Getting meaning from text is also really important. Reading does not have to be word perfect so long as the meaning is maintained. Choice of appropriate book is important. An appropriate book is one the child can actually read. Flash cards are not as interesting as stories.
- Evaluation is to assess children's ability for reports to parents and to show children's need. Specific evaluation is difficult due to the wide range within the class.
- Home influence is very important and it shows in the child.
- A good basic grounding in phonics in kindergarten , particularly initial sounds is necessary. A strong phonic base prevents reading problems. Phonic awareness is increased in year 1 through the emphasis on specific 'sounds' in the stories.
- Signs of reading during U.S.S.R. are that they read with their mouths open and don't just flip through the book or look into space. The teacher question the children sometimes about the books content.
- Her personal evaluation sheet better than school evaluation sheet as it has written comment on it. A tick is meaningless and involves a lot of guessing. Written comments are usable and require actual contact with the child.
- Good readers can retell the content of the story. Poor readers can retell through the picture but there isn't the depth of understanding. Children enjoy oral reading. Reading evaluation is hard. It involves a lot of observing. Good readers need to have a sound home background and they usually read a lot.
- Handing records on to the next teacher would be useful. Reading



ages are useful but not accurate. Ranked lists from previous teacher would have been just as useful. A short comment on each child from the previous teacher would be helpful.

- Good writers are not necessarily good readers. they just write and don't need assistance. a sense of humour is sometimes obvious and a confidence enabling them to read their stories to others. sometimes they show that they don't like mistakes.

- Good spellers are mostly good readers. They are not necessarily good spellers because they sound out words or invent spelling. It's because they know basic words like 'home' and 'dad' and 'mum'. They memorize those words into spelling words. Good spellers won't invent, they want it right. A bad speller invents all the time. They just spell it the way it sounds and even after weeks of having a word in the spelling lists a bad speller still gets it wrong. Some children use words around the room. They are poor spellers because they are not using their word attack skills. Word attack skills are breaking words up like 'mud' and 'dad' up into sounds.

- Reading activities are organized in groups based on ability. Children that can work independently are also grouped together so sometimes a good reader is with a bottom group because of lack of independence.

- You can tell if a child is intelligent by his looks, he shows confidence and speaks out loudly and politely.

- For weak children a home reading program would help using low ability reading books, e.g. This is a cat. This is a dog. repetitive type text. Continual reading of text is done until the child can read it back even if memorized. This helps confidence. After reading the book individual words are looked at. Texts such as Lets Spell and Lets Write would be suggested. These texts don't fit with process writing but poor readers do not know their initial sounds so it can only help. If they know their initial sounds they are further down the track than a blank page.

- She doesn't have any real knowledge about the school evaluation policy. The evaluation sheets are quite good at report time.

- Shyness can override a good speakers confidence.

- Good listeners listen to instructions and can retell.

- Expectations make the difference between A, B and C on the report. Top readers instantly get an 'A'. The decider between 'A' and 'B' would probably be the way they work in groups.

Practices

## Practices

Beth:

- Bases reading activities on a book, e.g. The Little Red Hen, over a fortnightly cycle. This includes songs and poems about the book. They read the book and have four rotating activities over eight days. Some of these activities are sequencing, a yes and no answer stencil and cut and paste activities. These change with each book. There are also four constant activities e.g. listening post and a 'sound' activity. Rigby skill builders are used and sometimes a little book is made to take home to read.

- Gets beginning readers started by teaching them some words but stories are better. Flash cards are made of the words in the story.

- Sends work home if the child is experiencing difficulty.

- Evaluates the literature based reading program by occasional note taking on the children's reading. Children choose a book to read to the teacher and the teacher comments. A, B or C are given. The grade is given only on that book. C could indicate that the book was too hard. Comments are also made on listening. Note is made of the level of the book. Comments on oral reading are made. If they are reading 'off by heart' word recognition is established through questioning. Fluency is noted and word attack skills and also if they seek help from the teacher. Volume is noted and also their enjoyment and their confidence. Sharing is done after U.S.S.R. but it is not compulsory. No actual comprehension check is done from oral reading. After silent reading the teacher sometimes asks 'what happened?'

- Throws the evaluation sheets out at the end of the year. They are used for reports and parent interviews.

- Arranges the reading groups according to the reading ages given in Kindergarten but some changes are made. Each group has the same work but the expectations are different. A different quality is also expected. The easy part of the reading stencil is word matching', by the bottom of the stencil they are joining words to pictures with the use of initial sounds.

- Uses check lists on words they know. Records are kept of the books they read.

- Observes speaking to discover confidence, how they talk to other children, how they speak to the teacher, mumblers and those who don't talk.

- Stores observations which in turn influence written comments. Observations are made of whether the child is copying, whether they are going back and re reading.

## Concerns

Beth is concerned that:

- As she has never taught a Year 1 before she says she doesn't know what average is and so finds awarding A's, B's and C's very difficult.
- She may not be doing the right thing in evaluation. Is the way she is doing it suitable?
- Checklists don't tell you very much about the individual child.

### INFERENTIAL REPORT

Beth is in a state of change. Most teachers are but in Beth it is very evident. She is beginning to come to grips with psycholinguistic theory, a lot of which she has discovered for herself. e.g. That the children learn phonic by picking up knowledge about phonic from their reading. She engenders a love of reading in her class and is very conscious that children at this age love to read to the teacher to show they can read.

She feels a literature based reading scheme is the best method she has ever used but I'm not sure what she means by literature based reading as she still uses Rigby and concentrates her reading activities around Rigby activities. She sees words knowledge as important and tests the children on a list from breakthrough. Improvement was noted by most children as this is seen as a valid evaluation procedure.

Because of the subjectivity of anecdotal and checklist type evaluation Beth feels opinions from one class to another can vary. Personality can also interfere in grading and evaluation, she feels, but I'm not sure if it's her personality or the children's.

Beth is confident of the procedures she is using both in teaching and evaluating but is looking to simplifying her own checklist next year. She is enthusiastic about the ideas and theories she is establishing.

## Dallas. Descriptive Report

Dallas teaches Year 5. She was successfully assessed for her first list in 1986.

### Beliefs.

Dallas believes that:

- Good readers always read a lot and can put together a very good story and read it as if its a novel.
- Giving all the children the same cloze passage is not right but is waiting for something better to come along.
- Comprehension questions should not be asked from cloze passages.
- A good writer uses their imagination, uses books read and is creative. Some children don't write so well but their comprehension is good.
- Some good writers have very basic ideas and not much creativity but have more of a sense of language and can put it together in a good flowing story, everything connects well.
- Different children have different attributes in regard to writing. Some can be extremely wordy but it flows and sounds terrific. Some children have a unique way of putting words together.
- When looking at children's writing you should look to see if the piece goes further than a first draft and follows the process steps and to see if the child has taken the trouble to rewrite or edit.
- There are two types of response to children's writing, written and oral. The written response is usually done in the absence of the author and is a response to the piece of writing, whereas the oral response is usually constructive and developmental, looking at upgrading the quality.
- Good spellers use a wide range of language other than their everyday language in their writing. They are able to spell the words they use but sometimes they only use 'safe' words. Some good spellers have a go, demonstrating the strategies they employ to get the words.
- Proofreading is a difficult strategy for poor readers. Some children can't look critically at their writing. They really haven't got the strategy for identifying errors.
- A's, B's and C's on reports are subjective. There are not many A's

in the present class, mostly B's.

- A lot of time has been spent on organising the school language evaluation program and new modifications for maths is coming.

- Judgements have to be made about how well the children understand what they are doing.

- A lot of evaluation comments don't come from tests. The checklists used last year were 'garbage'. Some comments like 'how children use word attack skills' were not adequate. Making judgements twice a term was too often.

- Comments on the new checklist are required twice a year to help with reports.

- Checklists will be suitable because it follows what is trying to be done in the school. The checklists can't be relied on other things like anecdotal records and comments are needed to help validate the list. The checklists are for every child but very little is written on some children.

- Some children can't express themselves well. Evaluation has to be made whether they can say something precisely and say what they mean, whether they volunteer information and have listened to the question.

## Practices.

### Dallas:

- Gives cloze passages as a measure of comprehension. Different levels of questions, e.g. literal, inferential and critical are given. All the children do the same cloze as a term test.

- When preparing a cloze passage fifteen to twenty deletions are picked. These deletions are at different rates and in different areas. A post cloze discussion is carried out. Comprehension questions are asked from these passages.

- Has individualized spelling lists but does not include seldom used words. Children have only words they have wrong on their list but this is reduced if they have a lot wrong in their writing. Words are not included that are deemed to be caused through haste during writing.

- Finds proofreading a sound method of testing spelling. A passage is

used with 'x' number of mistakes in it. The children are required to correct the passage. One mark is given for finding each incorrect word and another for each word corrected.

- Has different sorts of groups. Some are groups or pairs for language work and some are self-selected by the children. Sometimes work is done on an individual basis with the teacher such as conferencing and explaining stories.

- Conducts small group work activities.e.g. listening post.

- Does not always base grading on tests alone. The same tests are given across the grade but the results are not integrated.

- Gives formal tests in maths, handwriting, spelling and reading. Tests are given once a year.

- Gives the children a grade in writing by collecting a draft, making records at conferences and general observations made in the form of anecdotal records.

- Evaluates speaking and listening by observing if the children's contribution fits in with what everyone has been talking about or do they go off and tell something else.

- Evaluates listening by observing were the children's eyes and nose are pointing, how they are sitting on the floor, if their faces are showing interest and whether what they are listening to is above or beyond them.

Dallas is a leader as far as innovations is concerned. Her classroom and her teaching show this. She initiated the Literacy policy and is leading the field in factual writing in the classroom.

Again how to record evaluation is an on going problem. It is very time consuming and appears to be mainly for reports. A pupil records sheet keeps track of each pupil but is not developmental.

She along with most of the other teachers feel that evaluation should carry over to the next year but is very aware that it doesn't.

Dallas has a sound psycholinguistic base to all her classroom procedures. Her classroom immerses the children in all types of printed material. The children's work is constantly on display.

Dallas feels that the class she has this year has a very low performance level and is concerned about gradings for reports as well as the fact that children may be disadvantaged when they go to a more traditionally structured school. Fortunately she still endeavours to continue in her progressive style of literature based reading.

## Fiona Descriptive Report

Fiona has an O.A. class of six children initially but this has increased to ten now.

### Beliefs.

Fiona believes that:

- Written comments indicate an observed class level for each child, for example, level approximately year 4. These are observed comments only.
- Concentration, reading standard, e.g. non-reader, independent reader, and interest in books are the main areas of emphasis in reading. Lack of interest in books would be remedied by visits to the library, obtaining magazines from the shops and the borrowing of books from the school library. Individual words, phonics, sounding out and blending constitute reading. (This is supported by comments on her evaluation sheet. e.g. knows individual letters but cannot make connections.) Survival in reading plays an important part in her reading program i.e. to be able to read road signs, shop signs etc. The children enjoy making their own stories usually an innovation on a big book. A good reader has fluency, word attack skills (the ability to work words out) A good reader can be a good speller but word attack holds predominance. Sounding out unknown words is important. Fluency is oral reading without stopping and awareness of punctuation.
- A good speller is able to recognise if words are correct.
- Spelling, reading and writing are all connected. Vocabulary is important as it assists in extending stories. Spelling must be good.
- The children don't feel they are being successful in their writing. Comments on the evaluation sheet highlight the length of the story, conventions such as spelling and punctuation. Sometimes narrative structure is used. Correct spelling is important or at least almost correct. Others who are not good writers use invented spelling. Some children need to extend their stories. A 'sounds' program is employed. Once the sounds are known their writing will improve.
- In a small class it is easy to keep track.
- Writing improvement is evident in spelling ability and punctuation. If they can read what they have written credit is given.
- The home reading program helps the parents realize where the child



is at. Some parents aren't interested.

- Homework should be given later on in the year.
- Staff meetings involving the discussion of school evaluation are helpful.
- The children must be able to understand and follow directions and be able to listen to other children.
- Concentration is used in speaking which must be clear and audible. Eye contact is important also.

### Practices.

Fiona:

- Keeps written records of the children's progress. No formal testing is carried out although suggestions of the Macquarie tests were made.
- Looks at where the children are up to and looks at extending them from that point. Big books are used with the level being aimed at the middle of the class. Activities are set in connection with this story, usually about four, e.g. sequencing, cloze constructing sentences and matching sentences and pictures. Word matching becomes an activity for non-readers, such words as 'but', 'can' and 'cat'. After matching words the words are then included in sentences. They need a lot of help to do this. One girl can recognise the individual letters but cannot blend them.
- Checks on the children's knowledge of cueing systems by hearing them read. She listens to see if they know their sounds and can join them together.
- Has two groups for reading and number. One group is independent and can work by themselves after the work is explained, the teachers aid helps. Placement of new children in groups is done with consultation of previous teacher and by leaving the children to their own devices for a week or so to see where they fit in.. Their language and behaviour is also noted.
- Looks at the books the new children bring from their previous school or class but sometimes this is not accurate. The independent group work on a contract system and activity centre.
- Keeps a copy of the children's writing and spelling. They know the

letter names but not the sounds.

- Gains parent help in a home reading program. The children read books to parents and they sign a chart for points towards a reading certificate. No homework is given at present.

- Finds out about the children's listening ability by listening games. Most of the records are mental.

### Inferential report.

Fiona is new to the O.A. situation. she sees that the 'basics' particularly reading. It is important to the survival of these children that the other curriculum areas be attended to only when the 'basics' are taken care of. This is not what is being seen in the classroom. Some of the children were painting, others were cutting and pasting. Fair enough they were painting about some writing they had done but at least they were painting. It was not the impression I gained from the interview. F's concept of reading seems to be based on sounding out and knowing sounds. there doesn't seem to be much emphasis on meaning. The constant reminder of the necessity for blending and knowing sounds and the use of words out of context supports this.

The same goes for writing and spelling, the conventions seem to be of most importance. enjoyment and success seem to be beyond her understanding of the language process. It seems to me that these children need to begin from experience and move to reading. There was some evidence of this as they had been to a local animal park and had written about it and were painting and drawing about it. With such a small class it would seem that contract work may not be necessary.

Fiona is somewhat of a traditionalist but uses many observational techniques to mentally record progress and to help her place new children.

The stencils she gives the children show a wide range of expectations and some have little relevance to how the children process language. there seems to be no reference to quality of the written product. Invented spelling is looked on as inferior to correct or almost correct in writing.

### Gary. Descriptive Report

Gary is Executive Teacher, Primary and teachers a 4th grade. He obtained his second list in 1987.

Beliefs.

Gary believes that:

- There is a lack of evaluation of children's progress, particularly in language and has not comfortable about evaluation since he began to teach whole language. The school evaluation sheet can be used to record the judgements that are made after all the data has been collected. Evaluation of the children should be continual. He knows each child well enough to be able to discuss their progress after the first five weeks without any formal assessment.

- Records need to be kept for accountability to parents and teachers. Records are mainly for others.

- Some of the items on his own evaluation sheet were difficult to assess. These were; skills and strategies in reading and predicts unknown words using semantic, syntactic and grapho- phonic cues. Establishing new checklists must be worthwhile and not just tokenism. Some evaluation judgements can be made by a tick and a guess. e.g. enjoys writing. This is purely based on the teacher's perception but some items need the teacher to collect data. The checklist is simply a way of making the teacher sit down and reflect on a particular child. It channels them into a reflective process.

- Standardised tests are useful for streamed classes of for ranking children.

- The supervisor has to discuss the teacher's pre-conceptions and develop staff awareness in order to co-ordinate their thinking about the evaluation process.

- There were problems with working on a K-6 basis for language evaluation. Teachers had trouble answering questions in the bounds of where the children are expected to be along a continuum. Some points on the evaluation sheets were not felt to be strictly K-6. e.g. resources...dictionary use, making own spelling corrections. these, it was thought, were for older children. Teachers felt uncomfortable about making a judgement on five separate components of the process of writing. They felt more comfortable with items like 'can or cannot follow the routines.

- Peer interaction during co-operative cloze is more beneficial than individual cloze exercises.

- Children like to read and work with their own writing.

- Programs should contain statements of assessment like judgements made about oral retelling twice a term or a cloze mark kept. The judgement at the end should not be the summation of a whole lot of marks. Evaluation affects programming on an individual basis. Giving tests pressures children unnecessarily.

- Evaluation made available to the next teacher is not used. Record cards are not used. Teachers like to make up their own minds about the children. They may consult the previous teacher if clarification is needed. Record cards establish pre-conceived ideas.

- Parents place a lot of emphasis on the 'B' level on the report. they are happy if the child is on level 'A' and they know if they are on level 'C'. They always look at the grades even though they know the comments tell them more. Parents are comfortable with grades and numbers.

- Spelling competency is shown by a child who will have a go, identify errors and can look them up. This is not necessarily a good speller though according to the Dolch list standard. Testing is not an adequate way to look at spelling competency but judgements using the children's work are. There is value in knowing the 'natural' spellers and those who have to work at it. There is always room for extension of the natural spellers

- Children's writing should have literary worth. Awareness of worth must be at classroom level. Quality judgements can't be made every 10 weeks...a term is too narrow a time span. Good writers write often and enjoy writing. Original drafts show structure and good conventions and good levels of spelling understanding. Imagination is also desirable. Some children don't write much but have a uniqueness about their writing that is excellent.

## Practices.

Gary:

- Tried to find a suitable method of evaluation. Meetings were held with the principal to try and find a satisfactory language evaluation method. Current evaluation checklists were worked on because of Gary's inspection. These lists were implemented across grade four. A grade meeting analysed them and deleted these items that were difficult to assess. A draft of the resulting check lists were taken to the staff with the idea of devising a K-6 document. Enjoyment, skills and strategies across the curriculum were the areas considered. Difficulties were experienced in the area of predicting unknown words and predicting outcomes at text level. Assesses prediction through observation, oral reading and retelling. Oral retelling done on an individual basis, conferencing really, to assess the item on the evaluation sheet that states.. 'demands that reading makes sense.

Children were told prior to reading that they would have to retell. A recorded 1 to 5 rating was used for retelling.

- Had been hunting for a successful model of evaluation since he began teaching whole language. First look at the previous evaluation checklist seemed to be all right but a closer look revealed complications. Staff meeting resulted in drastic cut backs. the Principal wanted it to be K-6. It had to be relatively easy for all teachers and children. As they were they were very time consuming. Changes were also made to the checklist so that they could be operated over four terms with check made in only terms two and four to fit in with the reports. A lot of discussion on spelling during the staff meeting on writing was due to terminology. Judgements are now made about spelling by looking at the children's draft book. There is no items on the writing checklist that indicates quality. The items do not differentiate between ordinary writers and those with unique talents.

- Gives marks for cloze passages which are developed with a balance of processes being used. Some cloze passages are made from the children's own stories and some are written using the book being read in the classroom. Children that can't handle cloze have other reading material to work with. e.g. tapes, reading activities etc.

- Keeps record in an evaluation folder divided into section, one for each child. Anecdotal records are scribbled first then written up later. Evaluation information is passed on to the next teacher at the end of the year. The report system is basically anecdotal with a few checklist points... very broad.. Grades are given. Reports are given out at parent interviews.

- Evaluates the brighter children through an individualized reading program as they keep their own records of their progress through the activities.

Concerns.

Gary is concerned that:

- There is no adequate evaluation to equate with whole language.

- He still does not know what is the perfect evaluation or that he won't need to continually need to change it.

Gary is a driving force in the school and leads many of the innovations. His individualised spelling program is simple but effective. He is in a constant of change. He becomes satisfied in one area and then begins working on another. Several significant changes have occurred since I began this study. He has moved from a high percentage of free topic choice writing of the imaginative kind to a high percentage (four day out of five) of factual writing with set topics or choice of topics within as area.

Gary was the moving force behind the language evaluation. This was stimulated by his inspection and he has continued the momentum.

He is fully committed to a literature based reading program, both fiction and non fiction, but has trouble implementing it with the very poor readers. The amount of evaluation and the recording of it is a constant problem to Gary. His records show very little but he says he has it in his head. I believe he has a very sound knowledge of where every child is at but I'm not sure that this is enough. He sees a need for documentation particularly for accountability but is confused about exactly what to document or how to document it.

He has a statement (one page) about evaluation in his evaluation folder but I feel its purpose is dubious. Gary has internalised most of its information but does not necessarily use it all. Part of the problem seems to be that of audience. I don't know Gary really has the whole picture about evaluation. Perhaps with all the information Gary has in his head he should be asking how can this assist me in my programming?

### Michael Descriptive Report.

Michael is new to this school as from the beginning of the year (1987) It is his first permanent appointment. He trained at Macarthur 2 years ago and has since been doing casual work mainly in high schools. He teaches Year 5/6

#### Beliefs.

Michael believes that:

- Good writers are not afraid to have a go at spelling big words. Spelling doesn't count in writing. Different genre should also be used in writing. In writing the most important thing is that it makes sense and keeps to the topic. Quality is more important than quantity.

- Writing assessment is terribly judgmental. He looks for improvement in the children's work as a criteria for the writing to go on a special clip board.

- Some of the children's work is shoddy ie. not copying up work correctly after publishing...not making sense.

- Retelling should be accurate in storyline, characterisation, events and description.

- A good reader reads a variety of books as well as a good number of books. Intonation indicates comprehension.

- Marks are too judgmental.

- Parents should be encouraged to use the have-a-go technique when helping their children in spelling.

- Even though he keeps his own records it would have been helpful to have access to other records at the beginning of the year. He will use any method of evaluation that comes up. Standardised tests may give some help but most decisions are reached by trial and error and discussions with the teacher.

- A good speller must have a good grip on basic spelling and be able to correct them themselves. Resources such as a dictionary can be used. Sometimes the words used are not very adventurous. Quality varies, some children write a lot and don't get many mistakes, others write a little and get a lot wrong. Children vary in their capability for learning words. If they have a lot of words and can't learn that many a lesser number is negotiated with the child. These are words that the child feels are important. Basic words such as 'they' and

'this' are important and should have priority on a list.

- A good listener is confident in front of others. Retelling plays an important part of the listening process.
- The school policy encourages the children to read for meaning and have a go at writing and spelling. Spelling is meaning based and the children are encouraged to communicate effectively.
- He would get the parents to read to any child experiencing difficulty in language. The child should retell and write with an older brother or sister to check.
- Some of the fifths are better than the sixths.
- Marks on the children's work are threatening and so avoids them .
- The staff meetings on the development of the language evaluation sheets have been helpful.
- He will show his "ignorance" if he speaks up during staff meetings.

## Practices.

### Michael:

- Stores copies of stories in folders. One folder for each child. Only the best stories were placed in the folder. The others were disposed of.
- Reads the children's work and marks it when its published. The good stories go on a clip board in the store room and the not so good go in a manilla folder. The purpose of this is so that at the end of the year there will be a collection of good pieces. The published pieces were available for children to read with the authors permission. The criteria used when marking pieces are in accordance with conferencing information. e.g. how efficiently they used the information from previous conferencing or their re-writing. All work is looked at on an individual basis.
- Keeps a lot of numerical records for spelling. Each child is tested sometime during the week on their own list. Cloze and comprehension are given a mark. This is based on the type of questions asked e.g. Literal, inferential, creative or critical. Marks are also given for written retelling.



- Scores cloze out of 10. Comprehension is scored out of 20 and involves questions including question types mentioned above. - Does not write marks on the children's work. Marks are given for reading round the room.

- Uses school magazine stories for cloze and tries to delete words that encourage prediction. The whole class has the same cloze, middle of the road. The actual cloze sheets have a cloze passage on them and some questions but the questions do not refer to the passage that was used for cloze although it is obviously the same story. Comprehension passages are taken from a book being read to the class.

- Has reading round the room. He discusses books with the children to ascertain what they think the book is about.

- Does U.S.S.R. and sometimes uses this for observation.

- Give reports out at parent interviews. This is done in mid June. - Takes anecdotal records of types of books the children are reading and if the children are fully engaged in reading.

- Keeps anecdotal records about attitude and was thinking of using a 1 - 5 criteria for this. - Writes his anecdotal notes briefly at school and expands them at home.

- Establishes spelling lists through weekly set topics, (first draft) errors are taken from this at conference time and a copy given to the children.

- Keeps the original copy of the individual lists in his program. The children know they will be tested sometime during the week.

- Uses trial and error as a the basis for finding the number of words a child can manage. No more than 20 words would be given to any one child.

- Decides the group for new children in the class by talking to the child and looking at their book work and then tentatively places them in a group.

- Looks at their writing and also how they discuss and share.

- Looks at the children's audience to see their response when he evaluate speaking. He also looks at the child's willingness to speak in front of others. The unwilling children are conferenced. In listening observations are made during story reading.

- Finds the school evaluation sheets really helpful and uses the headings for his own evaluation.

### Concerns.

Michael is concerned that:

- About marks and tries to avoid marks for reading. He avoids committing himself to a mark for parents and uses broad terms. e.g. towards the top of the group.

- Parents feel he is not doing his job if there are spelling mistakes.

### Inferential report.

Michael is very enthusiastic and willing to learn. He reads anything that is given to him and searches for alternative suggestions. He reads the copies of the assignments the other staff have submitted for their post-graduate courses. (Principal keeps copies of all such assignments.) M is very aware of the expertise of those doing post graduate work and feels that they "know it all". He is not backward in asking for help from his supervisor. He is inclined to be "gun ho" and needs to settle down in both his ideas and his philosophy. He really wants to do the right thing by both the children and the school. It is fortunate that he is at a fairly liberal school so that some of this enthusiasm can be guided in the direction of current thinking. His theory base is broadening as he develops in his thinking and experience. He is continually searching for information about teaching methods and isn't afraid to ask on an individual bases but feels threatened in a whole school situation. In staff meetings he is inclined to sit back and listen and mentally agree or disagree. If he really feels strongly about something he says he speaks up but this was not evident in the staff meeting I witnessed. He would probably be a good candidate for trying out any new ideas in a classroom. I don't feel he really understands yet about how children learn. He tends to use a bit of everything he hears about. He seems to have some strategies under control but doesn't know why he is doing it. In writing he hasn't let go to the extent of free topic choice and obviously sees publishing as different to how I envisage it. Fortunately meaning and quality both hold pole position in writing. There seems to be some discrepancy between what M is saying is happening in his classroom as a result of writing and what is really happening. When I went to his room I could find no evidence of the clipboard he talked of frequently and when I ask about it he referred me to the children's own individual folders. Michael says there are manilla folders for the non published work.

Reading is primarily a meaning based subject but again there are some anomalies that don't fit. Although M says he doesn't like giving marks for reading his evaluation book has numerous columns of marks. Some even for oral reading which assumes that performance is ahead of meaning. He also doesn't like to put marks on the children's comprehension and cloze as he feels this is threatening but of the sample I saw half had marks them. I'm not sure what this means other than inconsistency.

In evaluation anecdotal records seem to preferential although as I have yet to see them I'm not sure of the extent of their coverage or of their usefulness. They always seems to be at home whenever I ask for them.

Observation plays a big part in reading, listening and speaking with records of these observations being recorded in the anecdotal records. The quality of M observations must be called into question as if he follows his eclectic model of teaching strategies he would have difficulty in knowing what specifically to observe. Trial and error is M's term for making decisions as a result of observation. Again there doesn't seem to be any recognisable techniques used. just "off the cuff". He is very conscious of being what he calls judgmental. This is his apology for observation and his own intuition.

Even though he makes many comments on the quality of children's writing and how good his good ones are a published sample of writing from these good writers show lack of completeness of story. They start well but seem to fizzle out. Lack of freedom of topic choice may be responsible here. Perhaps some demonstrations could also help. The concept of publishing needs to be development from several angles. One is the fact that publishing is the final copy and must be correct....there were many unconventional spellings and punctuation in the "published" copies. Another is the concept of audience. The published pieces are for the public and should be accessible and in a form that can be accessed.

He uses retelling as a form of evaluation in a fairly loose manner in that no record is made but there are certain expectations.

The room is well displayed with children's work. It was bare of books, particularly fiction. Even though Michael has some 'useful' strategies under control I suspect he is fairly traditional.

Trevor: Descriptive report.

School principal.

Beliefs:

Trevor believe that:

- Over the past two or three years both he and the teachers had to be pointed in a new direction.
- Policies should not be lock step or grade orientated.
- The literature policy cannot be implemented until the whole staff accept it through inservicing. Consultants have a lot to offer as far as inservicing is concerned. The staff have background for the policy but have not actually been introduced to it. If you create a climate of genuine understanding who makes the policy doesn't really matter but they should not be 'delivered' from on high, they should confirm what is already in operation. There is a need for guidance in order for the teachers to follow and maintain the policy. Small committees are often more convenient than large ones. The new literature policy needs to be reviewed and approved by the staff and then made official
- There is a need to have a whole school reading program that is based entirely on quality children's literature, both fact and fiction and not on any particular reading scheme.
- Mastery learning and phonics do not constitute reading. Reading is not a collection of subskills. It is a natural part of language the same as speaking and listening.
- Evaluation is more than literal comprehension exercises and standardized test and it is more than oral reading. Reading is a whole language activity and has to make sense. Teachers should use a wide range of analytical devices that are in total consonance with the psycholinguistic approach to reading. Teacher observations are valuable 'on the run'. A generalization about the class level of achievement in comprehension would be satisfactory. Scores for comprehension do not inform at all, there is a need to go further than numerical scores. Global assessment should alter the teaching plan in the classroom. Children need more practice in critical and creative interpretation than they do in the literal area. There has to be a balance between all these areas.. Developing comprehension question is very difficult. Cloze and retelling are adequate evaluation devices.
- There has to be a more realistic view of what teachers can do. After six months teaching a child the teacher can make judgements about the children's progress without referring to record.

- Teachers know the children in their class and may not need recourse to records in order to complete evaluation profiles but even so there should be on going records in the classroom.

## Practices.

### Trevor

- Dispensed with Distar and although the policy that the school still has reflects a behaviourist view of reading a new policy has begun to be introduced; a literature policy.
- Knows that the teachers are using comprehension passages with examples of critical creative and literal questions. Anecdotal records are being kept but scores are sometimes also used.

## Concerns.

### Trevor is concerned that:

- The infants teachers are not completely convinced about the new direction language teaching should be taking. It is very difficult to infiltrate and influence the infants department.
- Time as a resource is very scarce.
- A policy can be given to a school before they are ready for it.
- Written exercises can cloud the comprehension and hence the evaluation issue. Some comprehension questions are pitched too high for the children , thus destroying their confidence.
- The demands of all the curriculum areas and and the working out of evaluation in all those area is unrealistic.
- The standardizing process is not evident. How can you ensure everyone is evaluating the same thing?
- Most testing is void of meaning. There is too much testing.

### INFERENTIAL REPORT

Trevor has many concerns about evaluation. The quality and quantity syndrome have greatly effected him. He is very conscious of the amount of work that is involved in actual evaluation and is concerned that too much written evaluation will accomplish nothing. In trying to placate the teachers faced with the plathora of evaluation probabilities he is endeavouring to develop his staff in the use of checklists derived from the relatively new literacy policy. This policy initiates a literature based reading program. D.S.P. funds have enabled him to implement many language programs through inservicing his teachers. He has also made full use of all physical and human resources available to him. He is tremendously supportive of his staff and encourages them at every turn.

His thinking about language programs, their implementation and evaluation is heavily influenced by Jim Martin's and Joan Rothery's concepts. Factual writing has become a very large portion of the writing program from 1-6 with evaluation emphasising the confines of the genre. I suspect that the inservicing done to facilitate the staff in their knowledge of the genre approach has broadened their concepts of 'whole language'.

A broader than usual aspect is taken on comprehension in that critical, creative, inferential and literal areas are well covered and considered very important.

Trevor seems to have a fairly precise knowledge of each teacher in the primary (3-6) section of the school. He can tell you which program are satisfactory and in what way and which classroom are functioning well.

He is very confident that he has provided a sound and comfortable learning atmosphere for the teachers and none that I spoke with would disagree with that.

He seems fairly realistic about work loads and is always trying to cut down on things like written evaluation. It doesn't concern him that most teachers store most of their evaluation in their heads.

He is generally willing to concede to staff wishes in a democratic way during staff meetings but because he has an excellent command of the english language plus an deep understanding of language processes he can usually inadvertently take control and swing the majority to his way of thinking.

He basically does not interfere with the running of the infant's department but has many whole school staff meetings.

He greatly appreciates the youth and vitality in his staff and realizes that the progress that has been made in educating the staff could not have been made if the staff were entrenched and in another region where they would not be so open to change.

Trevor encourages his staff to do further studies and keeps copies of assignments of post graduate studies for reference material for other teachers. This give the teachers a sense of worth.

The development of policy (written) is done over a period of time. The policy is written by the principal and one other member of staff and then it is gradually introduced through inservicing. Only when the staff are completely familiar with the policy is it said to be implemented.

Trevor feels that written evaluation is another form of accountability. Teachers know their children but I can't help feeling that this is not enough. No one can carry the amount of information necessary in their head. Passing evaluation on from one teacher to the next is not necessary as the teachers don't look at such information. Record cards are ignored, only a general comment not scores.

Trevor believes that evaluation is done for accountability (Ed Dept) , not for the next teacher, class teachers which is informal, parents but translation of terms is necessary and for within school supervisors for more effective programs. There was no mention of the individual children and their development. Most of the purposes seem to be for terminal purposes.

## APPENDIX 8

### READING STRATEGIES



## Reading Strategies

**Shared Book:** This strategy uses books (sometimes published in extra large print for whole class use) that enable readers to read along and enjoy literature together in either small or large groups. This co-operative learning experience builds confidence, maintains meaning and allows the readers to feel safe to take risks in their learning.

**Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (U.S.S.R.):** This strategy provides opportunity for readers to self select materials and read silently for pure enjoyment on a daily basis. Silent reading demonstrated by the teacher during this time shows the children that reading is valued.

**Cloze:** This strategy is a meaning based procedure where specific words are deleted from the written text. Any word replacement that maintains meaning is acceptable. Cloze is often used as an assessment of comprehension. Meaning can be destroyed unless Cloze is constructed carefully and used correctly. At the school used for this study care was taken to ensure that Cloze was a meaningful activity.

**Retelling:** This strategy engages the reader in an activity that uses reading, writing, listening and speaking through a process that allows the reader to relate the content and understanding of the text read either orally or silently. It emphasises the notion that reading must be meaning based and allows the teacher to assess if the reader has comprehended the text.